

EMBRACING CHANGE: SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION OF A
CHURCH FOR GENERATIONAL INCLUSION THROUGH
PRAYER, SCRIPTURE, AND TEACHING

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ABSTRACT

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Second Baptist Church in Rahway, New Jersey is the context of this project. Developing a model to assist churches in preparing generations to learn and worship together is the purpose of the research, based on the hypothesis that churches which embrace generational inclusion in prayer and Christian education will be re-vitalized. The model included Pre and Post-tests, a Bible study series, and interviews. The outcomes of the project were better understanding of commonalities across generations, more inclusion of many generations in worship and church leadership, and increased awareness of how the church can become more inclusive of all ages.

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Various people from Second Baptist Church, my sorority, Delta Sigma Theta, Sorority Inc., the Prayer Partners, family and friends have assisted me on this doctoral journey. Some have prayed, others have challenged and more have comforted me with advice or a touching word.

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Thanks to Rev. Dr. James Ealey, who sanctioned me to do my ministry in his church and also ordained me in the process. Thanks also to the Second Baptist Church Family who participated in the surveys, Twelve Hour Prayer Day and the Bible Studies. My thanks to the seven people who agreed to be my Contextual Associates for the time they invested. Special gratitude to Rev. Sarah Benjamin who supported everything I did with prayer and participation.

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and I give them many accolades. This team included, Deaconess Lillie Hunter, Patricia Callahan, Eva Boone, Jenenne Black, Raven Walthour, and Fleetwood Quitley.

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For the many people who have assisted me and I have not written your name, know that I have you in my heart. What has emerged from this journey is a stronger more prayerful woman who is focused on serving God in any way He chooses. I thank and appreciate all whose paths I crossed.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my Heavenly Father who kept me focused when I wanted to let go. It is also dedicated to the memory of my mother and brother, and my grandparents who gave heavenly inspiration. It is also dedicated to all the prayer warriors I know, and have met along this journey, who provided words of wisdom. Finally, I dedicate this book to all the angels of light, the women who have wrapped the mantle of the gospel around themselves as leaders and ministers and continued to preach, teach and mentor others. Their words lifted me when I was worn down, cajoled me when I wanted to cry, and provided light when the path became dark.

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the book of Deuteronomy God instructs the Israelites to remember what He has done for them and teach it to their children and grandchildren. God expects for all of His children to teach at least the next two generations about His blessings, so that His faithfulness is never forgotten. By focusing on this commandment, and the recollection of my youth and young adult years in church, the realization of Christian disobedience came to light. I realized that Christians may be failing to continually teach the next generation of young adults. Reading the scriptures and viewing the young adults sitting as viewers and minimal participants in the church impelled the project of Embracing Change, Spiritual Transformation. When the church realizes that each generation has the common goal of searching for God, they can then begin to extend their hands toward each other than intergenerational worship is obtainable

Chapter One discusses my contextual setting, Second Baptist Church in Rahway, New Jersey. The church mirrors the church of my youth, a family friendly one that encouraged me as a youth and spiritually abandoned me as a young adult, but recognized my gift of speaking and taught me about serving in the church. Observing some of the congregation of Second Baptist enhanced my desire to delve into the subject: “Embracing Change, Spiritual Transformation of a Church for Generational Inclusion through Prayer, Scripture and Teaching.”

Chapter Two is the Biblical Foundations that reiterates how important it is to follow God's teachings and commandments. The Old Testament pericope, Deuteronomy 4:9, instructs one to teach. Everyone is expected to teach God's decrees and demands to two generations behind themselves, so that all generations will know of His goodness. The New Testament pericope, Matthew 28:19-20, presents Jesus' commandment to the disciples to go and teach. Both "go" and "teach" are action verbs which allude to the constant movement of the body of Christ. When one goes, one is moving from one place to another; when one teaches, one is imparting knowledge and skill to another, therefore the body of Christ is always actively sharing God with someone.

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Chapter Three is the Historical Foundation of the project which provides knowledge of how the Sunday School Movement began with one man's desire to keep young, derelict boys off the street on a Sunday. The movement began in England and eventually was brought to America. The Sunday School Movement was the impetus for later kinds of Christian Education, as Sunday School became a vehicle to assist congregations in teaching and strengthening youth in the word and knowledge of God.

Sunday Schools were one means of obeying the teaching component of the Great Commission through their ability to reach all generations.

Chapter Four is the Theological Foundation which provided the realization that for centuries people were ignoring the command to teach. The church is the bridge between what it is designed to do and what it does. The theologians refer to the Pastor as the leader who must direct the congregation to look at the scripture regarding generations.

Chapter Five is the Theoretical Foundation of the paper which allows various researchers to present information regarding why Generation X and the Millennials are leaving the church. Other researchers shared how to do programs involving young adults. Views were also shared on how and why the church could have all generations worship together. The Theoretical Foundation provides information about the generational issues in the nursing field. The nursing occupation is experiencing many of the issues that the churches are having with difference age cohorts working together. The nursing field also discovered that when the generations met together they discovered common ground, as well as acknowledging their differences. Because of improved communication, they worked better together as they learned together to respect each other's gifts.

Chapter Six is the conclusion of the project with an analysis of the Pre-and Post-tests and the Bible Studies Series. The results of the interviews with five generations in the church and a discussion of the Intergeneration Breakfast are presented. A review of these results will help determine whether or not this project can be used and improved for future use by this, and other churches.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

The congregation of Second Baptist Church-Rahway does not embrace change readily as they possess we have always done it this way mentality, thereby ignoring most suggestions for improvements and updates. Some chairpersons and presidents of auxiliaries and ministries have been in position for over ten years and their agendas and events have remained similar. Second Baptist is known for being a friendly church with a family atmosphere and many of the 500 members are second, third and fourth generations of families. The nucleus of the church members are over sixty years of age and these stalwarts are the controllers of the programs of the church. The church is in need of several changes that will lead them into the 21st century.

The young adults of the church are perplexed as to how to find a place in the church as the programs are clearly designed for the World War II elders, some boomers and the children between the ages of three and eighteen years of age. These young adults ranging from twenty five to forty years of age believe they are not important to the congregation as they are not included in most of the services and are not consulted regarding any programs. One or two of the young adults sing in the New Life Inspirational Voices in an attempt to belong and others assist with the children's group. They have voiced their concerns to the pastor that they are the minority in the church yet they are next in line to lead the church. They have asked the pastor to allow them time

and space to do something that pertains to them that will eventually allow them to participate in the church services. These young adults have recently met to discuss among themselves some ideas to present to the pastor but have not submitted anything to date. Some of the young adults have joined an interdenominational church in the city which is more youth oriented. There is no place in the ministries of Second Baptist for the young adults to stretch their wings or assert their talents and the church needs to acknowledge them as their future.

Second Baptist does not participate in current workshops for the majority of its ministries. The Deacon Board has not had any formal training for years even for its newest member of four years, a man in his forties. Two deacons recently indicated their desire to attend an ABC Ministries workshop for deacons but did not attend due to the death of one of the deacons. Less than five percent of the church attends the weekly bible study held every Wednesday night; it needs to be revamped to address the teachings the members are struggling with and the issues the people are facing such as faith and obedience. The church Bible study is taught line by line of certain scriptures, but does not have a theme. Three young adults participated in the Bible study production of the “Elements of the Cross” when the death of Jesus was presented as a play. Chairpersons of the Christian Education Department have not attended any current workshops presented by the Middlesex Central Baptist Association and have not had the children participate in any current contests that would have them presented to the Christian community in their area or region. The church needs to have leaders attend current Christian Education workshops. The church is friendly and supportive of its members who lose a loved one, as they help the member cope prior to and during the funeral.

The congregation visits, sends cards, attends the funeral and prepares a repast for the family of the deceased member. However, when the funeral is over there is no one to reach out and show compassion for the after reality of the loneliness of the person left behind. The church is in need of a Compassion Ministry composed of all ages within the church that will assist those who are in pain.

It appears that in the 123 year history of Second Baptist the elders provided for the youth between the ages of three to seventeen by having a children's choir, three to eight and youth choir, nine to seventeen and had plays and programs in which those ages could participate. However, the congregation often forgot about the young adults who remained after high school or returned after college to their home church. The elders have not prepared any special programs or ministries for those young adults. Twenty years earlier their parents and grandparents were the young adults and had pleaded with the pastor to let them develop a choir (New Life Voices) for their age group as they felt left out. Now they are the parents following the programs of their parents and some have been recommended for leadership positions, others just participate; they have left their children on the outside looking in. Some of the young adults have joined the choir of their parents (NLV) as this is the youngest adult choir in the church.

The church needs current workshops and training in all auxiliaries and ministries and in presenting relevant Bible study for all age groups. There is a need to seek training from the state associations and the General Baptist Association. Second Baptist members need to move progressively forward into the 21st century and begin to bridge the gap between the young adults, the boomers (their parents) and the war veteran elders (grandparents and great grandparents). Two generations have not been prepared to take

on the leadership of the church. The church's productivity and spiritual growth would be enhanced by attending current workshops and some church developed workshops that provide relevant training for the members of all ministries and auxiliaries for all age levels. A Leadership Team should be developed to oversee that all the ministries of the church are updated and constantly involved in outside workshops that are current and relevant to the growth of the entire population of the church. The leadership team should meet with the pastor and make recommendations for the speakers of the various programs and revivals, rotating them so that the congregation is exposed to new speakers which might revive their attendance. The church should seek to develop and train a Compassion Ministry that would work with those who are coping with life after the death of a loved one.

The congregation should always be teaching new members how to carry on the work of the church so that it continues to grow spiritually as God has instructed us to teach our children and our children's children his laws. Means and methods of closing the gap between multi-generations of the church between the ages of twenty five and eighty five years of age will solidify the spiritual growth and encourage each age group to share their knowledge, gifts and talents. The church needs constant prayer for all age groups to begin a journey of revival of their progress.

The strengths I bring to Second Baptist Church are from personal and educational experiences as well as spiritual encounters. The strongest strength I offer the congregation who does not grasp changes is the personal knowledge of me not being able to accept change until there was an encounter with God. Not being able to accept change was detrimental as I continued to behave in the same fashion year after year hindering my

dreams. God constant intervention of mentors was not recognized by me nor did I recognize or acknowledge that God loved me. God wanted first place in my life. I could not accept leaving stagnant situations because they were comfortable as there was no foreseeable solution to what I wanted out of life instead of following God's lead.

Second Baptist will have the strength of my degree in counseling and a certification in administration which has provided me opportunities to teach and counsel children and adults as well as prepare lessons, plan budgets and develop workshops. I can also share with the congregation the personal insights of leading persons in working together in a spiritual and community setting from my personal knowledge of leading three community and civil rights groups. I can share my knowledge of various, state and religious workshops and meetings which I have attended and participated in.

Presentations can be shared that have been made by me at spiritual workshops and programs in various denominations. Second Baptist will also experience the assets of compassion that the writer has developed from working with the AIDS Ministry, an abandoned baby's ministry and volunteering in the nursing homes and hospitals.

God has always been preparing me for ministry and serving others even when His nudging of intervention and love was not recognized. Mentors were placed in my life to encourage and enhance my knowledge and growth. Through the mentors' directions, through prayers and the submission to God's leadership, I developed skills to organize, develop projects and programs that were of assistance to others. God's gifts to me has been the ability to speak and lead others in their quest for higher heights and to solicit the most qualified persons in their professions to address whatever programs I developed. The congregation of Second Baptist Church can share in my personal experience of

prayer, surrender and the experience of spiritual direction when change occurs. Though the years I have developed an understanding of how Romans 8:28 which states: “We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to His purpose” which has fueled a part of my life.

Second Baptist Church spiritually abandons their young adults once they reach the age of eighteen and they have been maintaining this practice for several generations. The church has become comfortable in its status as a friendly church but not as an inclusive, obedient and updated church. There was no discussion and or sermon about the killing of black men. The church continues to hold on to and return to things that make them comfortable. As a church the congregation is not following the mandates of God to teach the children and the children’s children and it is not even taking advantage of the offered workshops for its leaders. Therefore the church is not growing; it is maintaining the older members and losing even the few newer members.

Although the church has twenty auxiliaries and ministries, few are dedicated to the youth and none are provided for the young adults therefore there is a generation spiritually unfed. There is no extending of the elders’ or parents’ hands to the young adults. The parents who were the young adults twenty years ago now only have their choir and several of them serve as leaders in the Youth Ministry which ranges from three to eighteen years old, while sitting quietly and accepting the church’s practice of exclusion thereby leaving the young adults to find a place of their own.

Like the congregation, I did not readily accept change, seeking love and acceptance from older men kept me in a stagnant position of returning to people I felt comfortable with, even though they mentally abused me. Seeking refuge in my church I

felt that I was a part of Christian community but was not being spiritually fed or being prepared to be the new generation of the church. Experiencing childhood paternal abandonment at an early age hindered my ability to move from situations that were detrimental to me and the experienced maternal mental and verbal abused left me feeling hopeless to change my situation. The abuses led me to second guess my decisions, avoid confrontations and seek to attend the church as a place of comfort and belonging but not necessarily a place of spiritual awareness or growth.

Being raised in a large church that also spiritually abandoned its young adults; I have personal insights as to some emotional hurts and spiritual abandonment issues and it causes. My work with young people in the schools where I taught has enhanced my rapport and understanding of how to work with young adults. I have also taught and worked with adults in an educational setting, a civil rights setting and a church setting and have been successful in developing programs that assist others in growing. If the elders of a church are willing to extend their hands to the young adults and listen to their views and if both groups are prayerful and are open to suggestions, plans can be developed to incorporate four generations working and worshipping together. I was vocal as a young woman and was mentored by those in leadership positions in the church who recognized my gift of speaking and organizing. I was mentored to be an usher, an auditor, and a Trustee of the church. Mentorship has been one of the key components of my life. The most important component was the realization that the church was not God, but was to serve as a representative of God's teaching, commands and laws and teach and prepare people to worship and serve. As a Christian, an educator and organizational leader, I have had many experiences and ideas that would be beneficial in assisting Second Baptist

Church to reach out to its young adults so that the congregation will be intergenerational in its worship. Through knowledge and enlightenment, the elders can create an atmosphere of acceptance and compassion which can solidify the intergenerational gap that exists in the church.

The proposed project will prepare the young adults through prayer, workshops bonding activities and mentoring for a purposeful assimilation into the current worship service as well as prepare them for the future leadership of the church. The project will also prepare the elders and the boomers for acceptance of the young adults into the worship service by addressing who, what, when and why of the spiritual abandonment of their future generation. Workshops for the two generations of the adults will be given so they understand their roles as teachers, leaders and bridges of the spiritual laws of God and the church. Workshops for the young adults will be given as to how to walk the bridge with the elders. Bonding events like a unity breakfast, a spa day, a barbershop day, a musical exchange will be hosted so that each generation understands how they are worshipping God and how to allow the worship service to be creative enough to accommodate all worshippers during the month of services.

Second Baptist Church and my synergy became apparent when I became a member of the church in 2013, and quickly realized that the church was slow in progressing into the 21st century. In time that I have been a member, several programs have been repeated with the same ministers and/or participants. I seemed destined to align with a church that mirrored the church of my youth; a church that worshipped God at its own pace whether it was current or not. That was a church where I experienced spiritual abandonment, and then an awakening. It was a church I was ready to leave until

mentors took me under their wings and placed me in various ministries so I could grow spiritually.

My journey toward a new church home ended at Second Baptist, because, after visiting the church on several occasions for anniversaries and concerts, I felt a friendship and I enjoyed the services. I had been previously associated with a twenty-first century church where the music was loud, but there was division in all the ministries of the church, and sense of closeness was discouraged. Prior to uniting with Second Baptist I had visited frequently for a month, attended their Bible study, and was aware of their friendliness. The pastor was friendly and I had an opportunity to speak with him before I became a member and he informed me that he did not have a place for another minister, but later assigned me to be a liaison to the organizations that the church belonged to.

It was not until I actually became a member that I realized how the synergy of the church and me were unmistakable. The family atmosphere was noted and the abandonment of the young adults was noted, yet no one seemed to want to address the missing members of their worship service. The young adults who had returned are the children of the boomers but they attend sporadically. The pastor is aware of the discontentment of the young adults but does not seem to know how to address them so he has adhered to their request to have a monthly meeting among themselves, as they do not want to leave the church.

In preparing the intergenerational congregation to extend a hand to their future I will seek to answer several questions.

- Does the church seek to follow the bible?
- Who is the supreme power of the church?

- What is the value of each generation in the church?
- Why is there a division of the generations in the church?
- Who is teaching whom and what are they teaching?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of all generational groups?
- How can the strengths be strengthened to move the church forward positively?
- What is the purpose and focus of all generational groups?

Realizing that prayer and education binds everything together in the church, I will seek to develop a joint Bible study class through role playing and selected topics for the generations to reflect on. A joint prayer breakfast will be planned with all generations of the church in which a member of each generation is given an opportunity to share their God with each other. I will seek to improve the communication between the various generations of the church with meetings and workshops to ascertain that all persons know the real reasons for the auxiliaries and explain them to the young adults and others. I will seek to have at least two older members of the church one elder and one boomer mentor for each young adult and ask them to establish a meeting time and date to share their role in the church. They would sit together for one or two services and the mentors would take the young adult to their auxiliary meeting, introduce them and explain why that auxiliary exists in the church. I would seek members of the Deacon Board to walk beside a young adult for four weeks with the permission of the pastor. It is anticipated that the four weeks of training will teach them the purpose of being a deacon; the same would be asked of the Deaconess Board. All of these plans will be submitted to the pastor for his approval.

It is my belief that as I attempt to work toward closing the intergenerational gap in Second Baptist Church I will learn:

- Why we as Christians continue to close the door on our young adults who remain in church denying our future leaders of the church the necessary training.
- Why we as the current leaders of the church fear sharing our Christian knowledge of worship and Christianity with young adults.
- What positive methods will allow intergenerational congregations to worship jointly together?
- What events and/or programs will shatter the panes of reluctance of sharing between the various generations in the church?

Offering the young adults the opportunity to be trained as leaders of the church and chairs of various auxiliaries will serve as validation or invalidation of the elders being capable of passing the baton of leadership to the boomers and the young adults. The project will be structured to educate and reeducate all generations of the church through prayer, workshops, shared generational events and mentoring. It will be important for the pastor and me to encourage the congregation of Second Baptist to think differently and for the elders, boomers and young adults to extend their hands and hearts readily to each other so they can be God's servants and leaders of the church.

The elders of the congregation must be made aware that they are not being displaced but they are receiving additional soldiers in God's army to walk with them. Through the Middlesex Central Baptist Association sessions and the American Baptist Training Sessions and several workshops developed and hosted by me, the young adults will be able to assume a purposeful place in the worship service of Second Baptist Church.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS

Attending church was an automatic activity in many homes because it was handed down by Baby Boomers' parents and their grandparents. Boomers are those who were born at the end of World War II between 1946 and 1964. The only way one did not attend church in such homes was because of illness. Saturday evenings were often times to review church school lessons, and be reminded of how good God had been during the week.

To some families it is still important. In fact, there is evidence that this is true on a global scale. According to Richard Allen Greene, a CNN blogger:

Christians are by far the largest religious group on the planet, and the religion has gone truly global over the past century. . . . Europe was the clear center of world Christianity one hundred years ago, but today the Americas are home to more than a third of all Christians. In fact, the United States has the world's largest Christian population, of more than 247 million, followed by Brazil and Mexico. . . . There are nearly 2.2 billion Christians around the world, making up about one third of the world's population-the same percentage as a century ago. . . .¹

At church, children and adults were taught about a Sovereign God who made all people and loved them in spite of their sins. This loving God gave His only begotten son to save them. The churches were often filled with two or three generations of the same

¹ Richard Allen Greene, "Christianity Goes Global as the World's Largest Religion," *Belief Blog* (December 19, 2011), accessed October 10, 2015, <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2011/12/19/christianity-goes-global-as-worlds-largest-religion/>.

family worshipping together. The children were also taught and mentored to present programs before the adults and trained to be in the baby choir, the youth choir and the junior ushers. The church taught and nurtured children until they were teenagers and then the older adults (parents and grandparents) seemed to leave the young adults on their own to discover additional information about God.

When this determined preparation of children and teenagers ended in their abandonment as they became young adults, it resulted in them leaving the church. Many of these young adults see no value in church, or view it as the parents' and grandparents' joy. The young adults of today, Generation X (those born between 1964 to the early 1980s), and Generation Y, also known as the Millennial generation, born between 1981 and the mid-1990s, who remain in church can often feel alienated and strive to seek God as best they can.

In an article, "The Missing Generation in our Churches," the author states:

The seventies witnessed churches surging with newly saved twenty-plus young people who reinvigorated the church. Unfortunately, the opposite is occurring today. There is a generation missing in many of our churches commonly referred to as Generation X, a generation born between 1961-1981. Generation X represents approximately a third of the U.S. population. These young people are impossible to ignore as they move through society at 93 million strong.²

Many churches have not acknowledged this generation of young adults, and so they feel forgotten because their Christian Education has not continued.

So, today's church must ask itself, "Are we educating the next generation of Christians?" In order to address this concern from a Biblical point of view, an Old Testament pericope in the book of Deuteronomy (4:9), and a New Testament pericope,

² Herman Harvey, "The Missing Generation in Our Churches," Assemblies of God, accessed October 15, 2015, http://ag.org/top/church_workers/evang_cult_Generation X.cfm.

Matthew 28: 19-20, will be investigated in this chapter. Both these scriptures deal with the continued teachings of God and passing that knowledge to each succeeding generation.

In the Old Testament God made it clear to the Israelites that they were to remember His laws and teach them to their children and their children's children. God prepared this everlasting commandment of teaching each generation because of the previous disobedience and weakness of the Israelite nation. Through the instruction of each generation the Israelites would be able to remember God's laws and in their own turn pass them on.

From Moses in the wilderness to the resurrected Jesus, we have been instructed to always teach the next generation. The resurrected Jesus instructed the disciples:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.³

Utilizing the Old Testament scripture (Deut. 4:9) and the New Testament scripture (Matthew 28:19-20) this project was developed in order to empower a church to utilize scriptures, prayers, and teachings to develop intergenerational worship so the membership can continuously share their knowledge of God with each other. Vital information, workshops, Bible study, and activities will be given to the membership to enhance the church's awareness of the ways in which they have abandoned young adult, and to assist in teaching the next generation of young adults in an effort to encourage them to remain in church and evangelize to get other young adults to return to church.

³ Matthew 28:19-20. Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotes in this document are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

The Old Testament

But take care and watch yourself closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children. (Deuteronomy 4:9)

The first five books of the Bible are often referred to as the Law of Moses or the Pentateuch; they inform the reader of the birth of a nation. Deuteronomy is the fifth book of the Pentateuch in which the Israelites, the new nation of God's people, find themselves at the end of forty year journey in the wilderness before entering the Promise Land. These stubborn hearted people, who have disobeyed and rejected God, his laws, his teaching and his handpicked servant Moses, are now located in the plains of Moab near Canaan, the Promised Land. Moses, who has been informed by God that he would see the Promise Land but not enter it because of his sin of disobedience, addresses the Israelites and reminds them of all that they have done and endured during the forty years.

Moses' speech is given to the new generation reminding them of how the older generation sinned after God led them out of Egypt. He reminds this new generation of the things they had not witnessed, and how God had met their parents on Mount Horeb, given the people the Ten Commandments, made a covenant with them. He also instructs them that God is the only God for Israel, and through obedience to God's laws and commandments they would be blessed and that disobedience would bring curses. He reminds them of how they are to observe God's laws and how they are to worship Him and not worship the other gods or idols that other nations worship as they prepare to live in a new land.

Now as Moses reminds this new generation of what the older generation experienced he brings the present and past together and renews the covenant that Israel

made with God. It is within this context that the statement of Deuteronomy 4:9, which implores the people to continuously teach succeeding generations about their God to insure the continuity of God's people, is placed.

Deuteronomy directly addresses the problem of the historical distance between past and present, between tradition and the needs of the contemporary generation, between revelation and interpretation. In that way, it is a remarkably modern text that instructs its audience how to become more thoughtful readers of scripture. In narrative terms Deuteronomy comes just as the Israelites are encamped on the plains of Moab, finally stand poised to enter the Promise Land. This entry into Canaan would provide the long awaited climax of the story that had begun with the promises to the ancestors in Genesis and whose fulfillment has been delayed by the enslavement in Egypt and the wandering in the wilderness. Now on the eve both of Moses' death and the nation's entry into the land without him, Moses as Deuteronomy speaker arrests the narrative action in order to deliver a series of three speeches grouped together as a long valedictory address. He reviews the nation's history, expounds upon their laws and instructs them about the importance of loyalty to God. He also requires that the nation swear upon oath to uphold this combination of law and theological instruction as a covenant upon the plains of Moab.⁴

God wanted all people to know of His majesty and His love for them. In biblical times knowledge of God was passed from one family member to another orally and by physical demonstration. There was no recorded evidence of Abraham teaching his family or his servants, but his servants must have heard or observed their master Abraham bowing and praying to his God. When Abraham sent his senior servant Eliezer to find Isaac, Abraham's son a wife, the servant bowed in prayer before God and prayed:

Lord, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today and show kindness to my master Abraham. See I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'please let down your jar that I may have a drink,' and she says 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'-let her be the one you have chosen for

⁴ Michael D. Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, New Revised Standard Version*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 240.

your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master.⁵

The servant had witnessed Abraham praying to and obeying the Lord His God, when his master had circumcised all of his servants and he accompanied Abraham to take his son Isaac to be a sacrifice to the Lord but told them he and the son were going to worship.

It appears that the knowledge of God was passed down to them through observation of Abraham. For the Jew, the real center of education was the home and the responsibility of educating the child was laid on the parents (Deut. 4:9-10, 6:7). The prophets were divinely inspired teachers recognized by the spoken and written words they taught the Israelites as God's will for them. The priest in early times also undertook the religious instruction of the people as there was no official title of teacher.⁶ According to the *Holman's Bible Dictionary*: "Most teaching and learning in the biblical period consisted of informal training and concentrated on the goal of passing along an approach to life centered on guidance for moral and religious lifestyle."⁷

Three major types of learning are mentioned in the bible with different emphases in each setting. The first and most common setting was the home in which moral instruction; cultural patterns, historical events, and spiritual guidance were taught by parents to children on an informal level with extended family involved in the task many times as well. A prime example of this setting is found in Deut. 6 (which includes the "Shema" which means to hear) parents were commanded to recite the commandments of

⁵NIV, Genesis 24:12-14.

⁶ Merrill C. Tenney and Moises Silva, eds., *Zondervan Encyclopedia of the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publisher, 2009).

⁷ Chad Brand, Charles Draper, Archie England, gen. eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 401.

God to their children and discuss them throughout the day. The Shema became for the Israelites' confession of faith by which they acknowledged the one true God and His Commandments for them.⁸

The Harper Bible Dictionary states: "In the Old Testament times the education of children devolved upon parents and was pre-eminently religious training.⁹ Parents educated their children to guarantee moral, financial and spiritual knowledge was passed on. The religious education of children is God's way of handing down the fruits of present privilege; God's way of maintaining his witness in the world and God's way of extending his Church. The natural law of the increase of population leads where parents are faithful, to a constant increase in the number of the godly."¹⁰

Throughout the wilderness experience of the Israelite, God sought to teach them who He was and what he expected of them. At Mt. Sinai God made a covenant with them through Moses and gave them the Ten Commandments. Throughout the biblical stories of the Pentateuch (the five books of Moses) we are informed of the Israelites rejection of God's laws. God had provided for them with food and water and protected them from all hurt, harm and danger, yet they were rebellious people. God wanted a relationship with His chosen people even after several rejections and pleads from Moses, he reestablished his covenant with them. The IVP Women's Commentary states: "Deuteronomy 4:1-14 sets out the relationship between possession of the land and obedience to the laws and decrees.

⁸ Brand, Draper, England, gen. eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 461.

⁹ Madeline S. Miller and J. Lane Miller, *Harper's Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed. (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1973), 150.

¹⁰ H. D. M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell, eds., *The Pulpit Commentary* (London, UK: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1882), 70.

The land and the laws were given to Israel by Yahweh, the God of their ancestors. The God who had cared for their ancestors and them in the past would continue to care for them and their descendants in the future. The land was the God-given place where the community could develop and flourish; the laws set out the pattern of God-ordained living that would enable the community to develop and flourish. Commitment to God and obedience to his laws were the keys. The challenge that is put before the people at this crucial stage in the life of the community is to make it happen. The constant references to children, the importance of teaching children and providing for the future of their children, emphasizes that this book is not just for the generation entering the land but for all those who will live in the land in the future.¹¹

Israel is distinguished both by its God and by its laws; the two ideas are interlocked. God is near and the laws embody the will of God. The revelation at Sinai/Horeb is recalled (Ex. 19-20; Deut. 5) in order to instruct this generation who did not experience it. Important is not to forget and educate your children so that one overcomes the distance of the “past” and it becomes the “present” and maintain it as a source of identity.¹²

In establishing a successful intergenerational worship in the church one must begin with the word of the Lord. His word, law and commandments established a covenant with his children. Deuteronomy, the last book of the Pentateuch, is where the Lord once again met with the Israelites as they are about to enter the Promise Land. God reestablished His covenant with the Israelites because God never wanted that current generation to forget what he had done for the former generation who died in the wilderness and what He had done for them the present generation and what He would do for the future generations, therefore He told them to teach everything to the children and their children’s children. God continually impressed upon the Israelites to pass His laws

¹¹ Mary J. Evans, “Deuteronomy,” *IVP Women’s Bible Commentary*, eds. Catherine Clark Kroeger and Mary J. Evans (Downers Grove, IL: Academic Press-Intervarsity Press, 2002), 91.

¹² Coogan, ed., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, 249.

and Commandments and knowledge of Him from one generation to another, teaching them everything in respect for all God has done for them.

Realizing that the Israelites had sinned and broken His Laws, the Lord instructs Moses four different times in the book of Deuteronomy to have parents teach the laws to the children. Moses does remind the children of Israel of God's Laws and how they had met the Lord on Mt. Sinai. In the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy, the sixth verse God tells Moses that His words and laws are wisdom. Moses relays the message to the Israelites to carefully observe God's words. These are marching orders from God. We are given wisdom and understanding through his commandments and laws. If the church observes God's commands, why are we not utilizing the wisdom to develop activities to bring our younger generation back to the church?

The author of "Deeper into the Word, Old Testament" states: "Old Testament religion was not focused on philosophy and thoughts about God, but on how one lived. To follow God, to walk with God, was to obey his law. To believe was to live in a certain way. So, wisdom was moral rather than intellectual; wisdom was something you lived out, not something you intellectually know. To be wise was to live wisely, that is to live according to the precepts of God."¹³

Wisdom is in the word and laws of God therefore the church must seek ways from the scriptures to develop ways to attract our next generation to the church. Do we still have wisdom in the church? Wisdom through the elders exists in the church, but it is hidden among their comfortability of we always do it this way and unwillingness to change. It will take the home and church working together and the church if necessary

¹³ Keri Wyatt Kent, *Deeper into the Word: Reflections on 100 Words in the Old Testament* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2011), 236.

being a substitute parental force for those who have no parents. The church must utilize the wisdom that has been given to us and step out of its comfort zone and begin to teach our children and the children's children as we worship together. Jack Lundbom defines wisdom as an intellectual capacity or quality of mind enabling one to live well in the world, to succeed, and to counsel others in a way of success. Its opposite is foolishness, usually reduced to the lack of good sense or good judgment in a person. The wise are admired; fools are held up to ridicule. In the bible, wisdom is also something infinitely above and beyond human beings, being the first of God's creation.¹⁴

Moses reminds the Israelites that God stated: "Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And teach them to your children and your grandchildren." He also tells them what God has said: "Gather the people to Me, and I will let them hear My words, that they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children" (Deut. 4:9-10). Moses reminds this newly covenanted community in the statement that is referred to as the *Shema*, "hear O Israel, that the Lord our God, the Lord is one." Moses also reminds them that they should love the Lord with all their hearts, their souls, and their might. He focuses their attention once again on teaching the words diligently to their children and keeping God's words before them day and night (Deut. 6:4-7). Finally, making the Israelites aware that they had angered God many times on their forty year journey, that he had interceded for them several times, and that he would not be entering into the Promise Land with them,

¹⁴ Jack R. Lundbom, "Wisdom Influence in the Book of Deuteronomy" in *Raising Up a Faithful Exegete: Essays in Honor of Richard D. Nelson*, eds. K. L. Noll and Brooks Schramm (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 193.

stressed to them how important it was to continually teach their children. He told them to keep God's word in their hearts and bind them on their hands and wear His words between their eyes and then teach them to their children, speaking of them when they sat in their homes, walked anywhere and when they lay down and when they got up (Deut. 11:18-19).

God's word was so important for the formation of this community and necessary for their survival that Moses emphasized how God had blessed them and would curse them and leave them unprotected should they turn away from his teachings. It is important that we teach God's commandments to our children so that we are obedient to his will. We must give them a foundation on which they can build even if they do not like doing church the way the generation before them did it. We nurture our youth through church school plays and activities that their young minds can handle but the church fails to develop bible studies or activities that will encourage these children so they can become Christian young adults.

Teaching and learning, with a larger aim of promoting doing, are important wisdom themes. . . . Moses teaches Yahweh's commands to the people . . . who are then supposed to teach the same to their children. . . . Teaching children is not something one believes in; it is something one does. . . . The verb 'to teach' . . . appears ten times in Deuteronomy, . . . and the verb 'to learn' . . . seven times. . . . The verb 'to teach' appears in no other book of the Pentateuch—only in Deuteronomy.¹⁵

The first teaching of the children is assigned to the parents, for that is where most children spend their formative years, with their parents or ancillary parents. The church, however, is not left out of the teaching paradigm; as part of the faith community, the

¹⁵ Lundbom, "Wisdom Influence," 201.

church must also teach. Roy Honeycutt discusses how the church must be confessional and creative but its main purpose is to teach. He states:

The church must never degenerate into the cold transmission of factual material unrelated in one's life involvement. Rather the church is to practice creative teaching. Judging the present by the canons of the past, the church will not be satisfied with this alone but will seek to make creative applications to present situations. The church teaches not only the Deuteronomic WORD OF GOD to Moses and seventh-century Israel. She communicates a creative WORD of GOD to every man in his present predicament. The teaching church of today should correlate its task with that of the home to the end that the church and home will stand as partners in a cooperative endeavor, implementing the divine will for the totality of man's involvements. The ministry of the teaching church will never reach its full potential apart from the home just as the family will never attain its proper role of stability and moral rectitude apart from the role of the teaching church.¹⁶

James Hamilton, Jr. stated that it was God's purpose to cover the dry land with His Glory and Adam's job was to rule and subdue the earth (Gen.1:28) and to expand the borders of Eden until the whole earth, was like Eden, a place where God was present, known, served, worshiped and uniquely present. Adam sinned and was expelled from Eden, but God did not give up his plan to cover the dry lands with his glory!¹⁷ God promised to raise up a seed from the woman who would crush the head of the serpent, defeating evil and He made promises to Abraham that he would overcome the curses. These promises were passed from Isaac to Jacob to the tribes of Israel. God gave Israel a

¹⁶ Roy L. Honeycutt, "Deuteronomy and the Teaching Church," *Review and Expositor* 61, no. 4 (Fall 1964): 293-294, accessed September 20, 2016, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*.

¹⁷ James M. Hamilton, "That the Coming Generation Might Praise the Lord," *The Journal of Family Ministry* 1, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 2010): 10, accessed October 25, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*.

new Eden and He gave Adam's task to Israel (Num. 14:21). Israel sinned just as Adam had, and Israel was exiled from the land just as Adam was exiled from Eden.¹⁸

We cannot give up on our future generation because the church is comfortable with the status quo. We must seek to develop a church curriculum that will encourage a partnership of the home and church so one generation embraces the next, and the commandments of God are passed from one generation to the next.

The New Testament

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen. Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV)

Matthew is the first of four Gospels in the New Testament; gospel means good news. There was 400 years of silence from God as He viewed His chosen people forgetting about Him and sinning by serving other gods and idols. The gospel of Matthew is slightly different from the other three gospels because it placed emphasis on Jesus; His birth, His ministry and His death and resurrection as a prelude to showing the Jewish people that Jesus was the Messiah that they did not recognize. Since the Old Testament when the new covenant people captured Canaan, they lived well but they also began to serve other Gods and made unholy sacrifices. There was little teaching about the Sovereign God who had chosen the Israelites. The roles of the priests, the prophets and judges were often ignored as the people wanted a King. Saul was chosen the King but he too disobeyed God and he was killed in battle. David, the psalmist was the next king, a man after God's own heart; he also sinned. David's son Solomon was the last king over the united kingdom of Israel; the kingdom became divided after the death of Solomon and became two separate kingdoms, one named

¹⁸ Hamilton, "That the Coming Generation," 10.

Judah and one named Israel. Both kingdoms were later attacked; Jerusalem was destroyed and the people were taken in exile for seventy years. Even though exiled some of the Israelites cried out to God, but God remained silent for 400 years. The prophet continuously prophesized that a king was coming but they did not know when.

In the book of Matthew we are introduced to Jesus' parents and made aware of the birth of Jesus, His baptism, His cousin John the Baptist, His ministry and the twelve men He chose to be His disciples. As one reads the book of Matthew one is made aware that Jesus has come to save the children of Israel but many do not accept him. Jesus heals, gives sight to the blind and performs other miracles but the priests and elders denied Him and the teachers of the law, the Pharisees and the Sadducees portrayed Jesus as a false prophet. The very ones that He came to save often denied Him. Born in Bethlehem, taken to Egypt to save His life, He returned and was baptized in Nazareth and spent much of His earth ministry on the move. He made his way to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Galilee, Bethsaida and other surrounding areas. However during His travels as He ministers to people, some gentiles believe in Him. He sends out His disciples to bring the message of His father to the Israelites only. Jealous Christian leaders eventually cause the crucifixion of Jesus. He had a date in Jerusalem to save humanity and He kept it. He is shamed by being hung on the cross, but He overcomes the shame with His resurrection and then instructs His disciples to continue His ministry but this time they are to take the ministry to all nations; the entire world is to be saved. The church must continue the evangelism ministry that Jesus began so that others may be saved. Mark Powell states:

The gospel of Matthew tells the story of Jesus' life, ministry, death, and resurrection. In this regard, it is similar to the other three NT Gospels. But Matthew's Gospel is distinctive in certain respects: it has the most Jewish tone of the four Gospels; it presents the clearest and most comprehensive record of Jesus' teaching; and it emphasized the continuing validity of the law as a guide to moral behavior and the continuing presence of Christ in the institution of the church. It also portrays a more dualistic view of reality than the other synoptic Gospels, dividing people and things into clear-cut categories of "good" and "evil" The author further states: "Popular

Christian tradition ascribes this Gospel to the tax collector named Matthew, who, according to the book, became one of Jesus' twelve disciples (9:9). The Gospel itself, however, is anonymous and my few scholars today would credit it directly to one of the twelve. Since the book uses both the Gospel of Mark and an ancient collection of sayings (called Q) and sources, it is not likely to have been composed by an eyewitness. Most scholars think the work was compiled around A.D. 85 by second generation Christian in an urban Greco-Roman setting. The city of Antioch is a favorite candidate for its location.¹⁹

The last words of the risen Savior (Matthew 28:19-20) to the remaining disciples as he sent them out into the world causes one to reflect on Jesus's life, his teachings and his former commandment to the disciples. Previously Jesus sent the disciples with instructions not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but to go to the lost sheep of the House of Israel (Matthew 10: 5-6). Jesus however was rejected by the Israelites as they looked for a coming king who would remove them from under the Roman dominion. Though rejected by his people, some gentiles embraced his positive message and believed in his healing. It was a centurion who pleaded with Jesus to speak a word and heal the centurion's servant. This Roman officer believed what he had heard about Jesus' healing. He believed that since he was a man of authority and made commands that were followed that Jesus as a man of authority could heal his servant just by speaking a word. Jesus was amazed at the Roman centurion's faith and spoke the word and the servant was healed (Matthew 8:5-1, NKJV).

There was another example of a Gentile believing in this Jewish teacher; a woman of Canaan pleaded with Jesus to have mercy on her because her daughter was demon possessed and she wanted Jesus to heal the daughter. She begged the Master, but Jesus continued to ignore her and explained that he had only come to help the lost sheep of Israel and explained that it would be unfair to take what he had for the Israelites and give

¹⁹ James Mays, gen. ed., *The Harper Collins Bible Commentary* (San Francisco, CA: 2000), 868.

it to the dogs. But the woman who was desperate, believed in what she had heard and seen Jesus do, so she replied to him that dogs eat crumbs from their masters table and therefore she was willing to take the crumbs that fell from his gifts to the Israelites. Jesus recognized her faith and her daughter was healed instantly-Matthew 15: 21-28 (NKJV). However it was not until Jesus had been betrayed, humiliated, crucified, buried, and arose from the grave that He gave a new commandment to the disciples. That commandment was to include all nations (Israelites, Gentiles, Samaritans and the world). He was giving directions to the remaining disciples to continue the work that he had begun and that he had sent them out to do in the Israelite community, but they were now to include the world.

Jesus' words to the disciples were positive action-filled words that needed attention immediately not later. The word "go" is a present tense verb which means to move on a course, it is an intransitive verb that does not need a direct object in order to complete its meaning.²⁰ Make is defined as to cause to exist, occur or appear or create.²¹ The word baptizing mean to purify or cleanse spiritually;²² it also acts as a participle to modify the word them. The Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary states that the word baptize is itself borrowed from the Greek term 'baptizo.' Baptism is the Christian rite of initiation practiced by almost all who profess to embrace the Christian Faith.

In the New Testament era persons professing Christians were immersed in water as a public confession of their faith in Jesus, the Savior. This was accomplished in direct

²⁰ Frederick C. Mish, ed., *Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Merriam Webster Publisher, 2012), 535.

²¹ Mish, *Merriam Webster*, 75.

²² Mish, *Merriam Webster*, 97.

obedience to the explicit mandate of the Lord (Matthew 28: 16-20).²³ Perhaps Matthew was swayed, in the use of the word, by the baptism which the synagogue required of proselytes . . . some symbol or ritual we cannot avoid, until we succeed in living as disembodied spirits. The Christian forms, especially of baptism and the Lord's Supper have been and are used of God with singular blessing. They vivify truth: they unite the church: through the Word that accompanies them they are the "means of grace."²⁴

Baptism is to be performed with the Trinitarian formula (unique in the gospel tradition) and instruction is to stress what Jesus commanded. His presence is promised throughout the present age.²⁵ Baptism should come with teaching. Teaching is a term that reflects the finely ethical strain in this Gospel: the kingdom life is no mere emotion but understanding in righteousness. But it goes beyond ethic: it is life and joy. . . . The Christian teacher must be silent at times, for he is never coercive; and he is a learner, even while he teaches, both from God and human.²⁶

Teaching has been a part of faith since the sojourn of the Hebrews through the wilderness; parents did the teaching regarding God, the home, the agriculture, and moral laws. The verb *didasko* appears ninety seven times in the Greek New Testament and is always translated "teach." It describes what Jesus throughout his ministry as He lived and worked among men he chose; the role of teacher (*didaskalos*). The four gospels agree in

²³ Brand, Draper, England, gen. eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 166.

²⁴ M. Eugene Boring, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," *The New Interpreter's Bible Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), VIII: 623.

²⁵ Howard Clark, notes and references ed., *The Cambridge Annotated Study Bible* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 32.

²⁶ M. Eugene Boring, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," VIII: 623.

so portraying him. People spoke of him as such, and they addressed him as “teacher.”²⁷

Jesus further instructed his disciples: “teaching them all I have commanded you.” The phrase “I have commanded” is the present perfect tense, which means the action is already completed. He was giving them orders now which He had already given to them prior to this time. He had sent them out earlier to the Israelites and now he was sending them to the entire world to continue the work he had begun, and they carried out with the lost sheep of Israel.

Douglas Hare states:

To do what Jesus teaches (“my words” 7:24) is to do the will of the Father in heaven (7:21). The tense of the participles, baptizing and teaching does not indicate that the Gentiles must be disciples before they are baptized or baptized before they are taught. It looks as if Matthew perceives baptism as occurrence the middle of becoming a disciple and the teaching process that must continue indefinitely. The emphasis is on Jesus’ teachings and clearly points in the direction of nurturing a community.²⁸

Too often our present day churches are focused on programs rather than on teaching. Our young adults love programs, but do not have to come to church to attend one. They are seeking to be taught how to live by God’s commandments and know what those commandments are.

The author of *The Verbs of the Great Commission* explains:

It is often said that God is a God of verbs. He is on the move. He acts. He creates. He re-creates. He forgives and gives new life and salvation. As Matthew relates the last critical conversation of Jesus with his disciples he reminded them that his Father had given him all authority in heaven and on earth (Mt 28:18-20). On the basis of that authority he set them in motion-“go!” we translate the participle –so that they could be engaged in the activity of making disciples. Two more participles fill out the meaning of that command. We make disciples by

²⁷ Ronald Bridges and Luther A. Weigle, *The Bible Word Book: Concerning Obsolete Archaic Words in the King James Version of the Bible* (New York, NY: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960), 340.

²⁸ Douglas R. Hare, *Matthew*, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1993), 334.

“baptizing” and “teaching”, by serving as midwives in the rebirth of those whom God gives new life (Jn 3:3-5), and by helping to raise these children born from above in the faith that accompanies baptism (Mk 16:16).²⁹

Today “go” still means to move from where you are. Teaching is still imparting knowledge and causing someone to know. We as the church need to focus more on this commandment to insure and enhance our intergenerational worship. Teaching every generation about God insures that every one of his children knows who God is. Today we view that many churches do not have true intergenerational worship because they ignore the command that was given to the Israelites, because they do not see this as addressing them today as it is from the Old Testament. However the church must realize that God’s word stands forever.

The newly minted religious community of Israelites was instructed not to forget that their God was the one who supplied their needs and not to forget what He had done for them throughout their forty year journey in the wilderness. As they were preparing to enter into a new phase of life in the Promise Land they were further instructed to teach their next generation. Those laws were passed down orally to their children by their mothers and fathers, as there were no formal schools at the time. The Israelites forgot what God had done for them in the wilderness and as they prospered in the land of promise they forgot to teach the next generation about God or remind that generation to follow his laws, therefore as each generation grew they worshipped idols instead of the one true God who had delivered their ancestors.

Seeking to locate teaching in the New Testament, one is reminded that the resurrected Jesus commanded the disciples to teach new disciples after they had baptized

²⁹ Robert Kolb, “The Verbs of the Great Commission,” *Missio Apostolica* 14, no. 1 (May 2006), 67, accessed September 15, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*.

them. The basis of a good intergenerational worship must have its foundation in the Old Testament Commandment of passing God laws from generation to generation and in the Evangelizing Commandment of Jesus to go and make disciples, baptizing and teaching them everything that Jesus had commanded. That commandment will never cease, it is and should be the foundation of the church, always bringing a new person into the fold to learn about God, reach one, teach one and baptize one in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When we as Christians who have been saved give our personal testimony and share it with someone, they are better equipped to open their hearts and see the goodness of God. The most remarkable feature of Matthew's commissioning statement is the absence of any call to preach the gospel!

Now the disciples are given authority not only to baptize, but also to teach. Although they have previously shared in Jesus' authority, prior to Easter the disciples had not been authorized to teach. After baptizing disciples, the continuing Christian community is to instruct them in all that Jesus taught. "All" here reflects the "all" of 26:1, and it refers not only to the Sermon on the Mount but to all of Jesus' teaching contained in the Gospel as well, especially the five great discourses. Nothing is said of the Torah. Jesus' teaching that fulfills the Torah is the sole content of the disciples' teaching, as it will be the sole criterion on the last day (7:24-27).³⁰

The Great Commission was given to Jesus' disciples and those who have been baptized and taught are disciples. Whether we are a member of a church or not we have been given the Great Commission as individuals to share with the world and make them aware of the goodness of God. This commission did not cease with the original disciples;

³⁰ M. Eugene Boring, "The Gospel According to St. Matthew," VIII: 504.

it continues as long as there is a Body of Christ, or faith community that is responsible to inform others that Jesus is our Savior sent by God to save us. Robert Kolb states:

“Go, therefore and make disciples.” These words form the heart of what contemporary Christians call “the Great Commission,” the basis for much of our discussion of Christian outreach at the end of the twentieth century. God is the commissioner, he is the one who sends; it is his mission. The mission of his disciples extends the mission of the Messiah. . . . Matthew 28:18-20 provides us not only the command of Jesus to gather God’s people into his following and flock. It also has given the church important details on how to go about “making disciples.” In this passage two participles explain the imperative, “make disciples.” The first instructs the church to baptize the second to teach. Although there is no chronological necessity set down in the order of these two parts of the process, there is a certain theological rationale in so ordering these two gifts of God. Baptism is the birth of the child of God (John 3:3-5). Teaching enables the child to grow and mature. . . . Disciples are literally reborn, . . . not made, but like all children, of course, the children of God need to grow and develop. The God who gives new birth in baptism fills out the faith thus born and bestowed through teaching.³¹

The church can get reassurance from this pericope that they are to teach as well as baptize; which can be small group sessions, family and friends’ Bible studies, as well as gathering in His name. We are in a demanding occupation; we are disciples called upon to build up the community of God with the assistance of Jesus who has informed us that He will always be with us.

Walter J. Harrets discussed the role of the disciples. He states that disciples do not live for themselves. Jesus commissions this group of disciples to form a world-wide mission community of Jewish and Gentile disciples that lives out Jesus’ teaching. To do so is to be an alternative community with commitments and practices that are antithetical

³¹ Robert A. Kolb, “The Five Great Commissions and Contemporary Christian Witness,” *Missio Apostolica* 2, no. 2 (November 1994), 75, accessed September 15, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*.

to Rome's values and practices. Various scenes exist in Rome's literature in which god's commission Rome to worldwide domination and military superiority.³²

The author also shared that Matthew's community is given a similar goal, not by Jupiter and the gods, but by Jesus, but its means of implementation are very different. Instead of military power, it employs compassionate power, healing, mercy, an inclusive community and life-giving words to proclaim and enact God's empire (10:7-8). The community of disciples carries out this task in a world marked by imperial lies and hostility but Jesus' presence strengthens them.³³ The author has a valid point that the disciples had a difficult task to carry Jesus' words to a violent community, but like today in the difficult world we live in, Jesus presence is available to those disciples who want to carry his words and work forth.

As one reads and rereads the story of Israel disobeying God and realizes that the body of Christ is not continuously informing the generations behind them who began serving other Gods, one realizes that the church is suffering the same fate today. We have not informed our generations behind us and our churches are falling down from the lack of participation of the young. As the elders are dying, there are few to pick up their mantles to strengthen the discipleship. Our young adults do not inhabit or embrace the church as the older generation did. The elders failed to see the importance of informing the younger generation therefore the younger generation fails to see the need to worship as the elders do.

³² Walter J. Harrets, gen. ed., *The New Interpreters Study Bible, NRSV with the Apocrypha*, (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 1800.

³³ Harrets, *The New Interpreters*, 1800.

Gary McIntosh states: The concept of generations is actually quite old. The Bible uses the words generation and generations 201 times; and there are lists of entire families, such as found in Genesis 5. Each generation has an evangelistic mandate to communicate the good news to all generations. Psalm 145:4 confirms, “One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts.”³⁴ McIntosh also states that Scripture obviously takes the theme of generation seriously. It affirms the different nature of generation particularly that some generations are more responsive to the gospel than others. What is more, the Bible affirms that there is a natural succession of generations: “A generation goes and generation comes, but the earth remains forever” (Eccles. 1:4).³⁵

Each generation must be willing to reach across the table to indicate they are willing to learn and be taught. The primary hands must belong to the elders who did not impart to the young generation what they needed to know about God.

In the article entitled “Equipping the Generations: A Three-Pronged Approach to Discipleship,” the author, Voddie Baucham, Jr., asks: “How do you make a Christian disciple?” He then states that if you ask most Christians the question you will probably get responses like, “Take them through a class,” or “Assign them a mentor.” He goes on to say, “It’s possible that few responses would point to Scripture. Even fewer would point to the New Testament book of Titus.”³⁶

³⁴ Gary L. McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 198.

³⁵ McIntosh, *One Church Four Generations*, 198.

³⁶ Voddie Baucham, “A Three-Pronged Approach to Discipleship,” *The Journal of Family Ministry* 2, no. 1 (Fall-Winter, 2011), 74, Accessed October 29, 2015, *ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, EBSCOhost*.

The author continues his discussion with clarity,

. . . [D]iscipling our children is not about teaching them to behave in a way that won't embarrass us. [Instead], we are working toward something much more important than that. We're actually raising our children with a view toward leading them to trust and to follow Christ. Moreover, as members of a local body, we're striving to do this work in conjunction with other families who are doing the same. The result is a synergistic thrust designed to propel our children into the next generation of kingdom service—and all this is done in utter dependence upon God's grace to do the work.³⁷

Regarding Paul's letter to Titus, Baucham notes the, “. . . earnest desire to see the gospel proclaimed, preserved, and passed on.”³⁸ Further noting,

For Titus's mission to succeed, he will have to “teach what accords with sound doctrine” (2:1) and “urge the younger men” (2:6); he must “in all respects...be a model of good works” (2:7); he must “show integrity, dignity, and sound speech that cannot be condemned, so that an opponent may be put to shame” (2:78 [sic]). He is to “declare these things” and to “exhort and rebuke with all authority” (2:15), and “remind them” (3:1).

In other words, Titus will have to be a disciple-maker.³⁹

The author refers to the model of discipleship he gleans from the book of Titus as a kind of “three legged stool.” He states that:

An examination of the first two chapters in Titus reveals a pattern I like to call the “three-legged stool” of discipleship. These three supports are (1) godly, mature men and women in the church; (2) godly, manly pastors and elders; and (3) biblically functioning homes. I like to think of them as three interrelated gifts with which God has blessed his people. This stool is designed to support, constrain, shape, and protect believing parents and their children as they grow to maturity. Each leg in the stool is crucial as they work synergistically in the discipleship process.⁴⁰

Praying together, studying a scripture together and sharing each other's music and culture can begin to open doors of understanding between generations. Releasing the hold

³⁷ Baucham, “A Three-Pronged Approach,” 74.

³⁸ Baucham, “A Three-Pronged Approach,” 74.

³⁹ Baucham, “A Three-Pronged Approach,” 74.

⁴⁰ Baucham, “A Three-Pronged Approach,” 74.

that some elders have on various ministries in the church can be encouraging to younger generations inviting them in and being their mentor, not their overseer may encourage the younger generation's walk.

Jimmy Long, author of *Emerging Hope*, states:

To help the younger generations grow into leadership we need to empower them in their tasks, not control them. The key is instilling within them a sense of trust and confidence. Their confidence grows as they are given responsibility for tasks as well as assurance that they can accomplish the task. As we empower them in these tasks, they are able to assume leadership of small group communities and other responsibilities.⁴¹

Long also indicates that,

. . . while the Boomers may stand anonymously on the fringe of a church, people in the emerging culture want to become involved. While Boomers have a hard time sharing with a group, the younger generations want to dialogue. The kinds of ministries that we have established for the Boomer generation are not as effective with people in the emerging culture.⁴²

The church must be aware of the need for all generations to meet and discuss how they can jointly serve God, blending knowledge, concern and love for each other with God and His commandments being the focus of the generational gatherings.

Summary

The generations from the oldest World War II fighters to the Baby Boomers to the Generations X and Y and the Millennials must seek to begin to dialogue with each other so they can realize the value of each other's generation and culture so they can find an initial place in which they can begin to worship together. The church as the body of

⁴¹Jimmy Long, *Emerging Hope: A Strategy for Reaching Postmodern Generations* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004) 161.

⁴² Long, *Emerging Hope*, 161.

Christ must make provisions to allow for the meetings of the generations and develop a strategy to bring the generations together with prayer and scripture.

As Christians the church should began to pray together, plan small meetings with the different generations they have and work toward having an intergeneration prayer breakfast where the generations can speak about their heritage, listen to what the younger generation is faced with, study scriptures together and learn from each other. Together the elders and the younger generations can plan how to work with an evangelist to plan a day of evangelism within the church first, then a park or train station where various generations are located and any member of the various generations of the church who are willing can readily participate. The church must be in the forefront of holding the hands of the younger generation and binding those hands to the elders in love encouraging them to share the religious elements of their lives.

In the book *Reaching People Under 40, while Keeping People Over 60*, the author makes the church aware:

For the church to be on mission, reaching people under forty, it must be following the Great Commission and be outwardly focused as it is inwardly focused, concerned as much about them as us. Jesus final words were the culmination of his earthly ministry-his example, his teaching, his mentoring.⁴³

The church may be at a crossroad of how to get the elders to let go of the ministries that they have built and how to mentor without directing the young adults. The authors of the *Generation Driven Church*, William and LeEtta Benke state:

Our own stories are often the most effective way to communicate the gospel to Xers. Narrative evangelism involves telling God's story along and relate it to the course of our life story, which has lead us to consider a new Christ-centered perspective and direction. Narrative evangelism requires that we live our story

⁴³ Edward H. Hammett with James R. Pierce, *Reaching People under 40, While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for all Generations* (St. Louis, MI: Chalice Press, 2007), 19.

with demonstrated authenticity, integrity and humility while communicating God's story.⁴⁴

Benke and Benke further discuss how this relational story-telling demonstrates how God's Master Plan intersects with our life story and how one's story becomes a part of God's story. This personal testimony—both verbally and through life demonstration—relates how this plays out in daily life while we await the great promises of the future and all eternity to unfold.⁴⁵

The Church should not be fearful or slack in its duties to “Go and make disciples”, for it is His commandment. We as the body of Christ have not only forgotten to share the Good News outside of the walls of where we worship; we have also failed to share that Good News within our own church walls. We have not given our younger generation their inheritance, the necessary ingredients and teachings that they need to grow stronger in the Lord.

It is time for the church to have an Inheritance Meeting between the generations and let them know how the elders have walked with God, how they fell down and how they got up. The young adults within the church need to know that the walk of faith has some detours and potholes in it. They need to hear how the elders made the journey so they can be prepared how to handle situations. The church should prepare Inheritance Certificates that shows how their faith grew and what they are leaving the young adults to help them survive. The church also needs to go outside the walls of its sanctuary and look for those who need to hear about God. We are disobedient in that we have not told our younger generations about the commandments of God, nor have we gone out to seek and

⁴⁴ William Benke and LeEtta Benke, *The Generation Driven Church: Evangelizing Boomers, Busters, and Millennials* (Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2002), 72.

⁴⁵ Benke and Benke, *The Generation Driven Church*, 72.

evangelize new disciples. The pathways are dangerous and we often use that as an excuse not to seek new members, but we forget that Jesus stated that he would be with us.

George Barna, in *Evangelism that Works*, addressed our responsibility to God, the Church and the younger generations by stating: “You and I have a responsibility to share the love of Christ with others, seeking to introduce them to a living Savior. We can lean on Him for wisdom, power, discernment and guidance toward helping people and pleasing God.”⁴⁶ He further states:

We can recall and stand firm on the promises He made to us regarding our spiritual development and our ability to touch others on His behalf. When we share His message with others, we invariably grow in the process. Sometimes our hearts mature as we learn to love a bit more deeply to be touched a bit easier by the plight of the spiritually desperate.⁴⁷

Praying together, studying scripture together and sharing each other’s religious history, each other’s music and culture can begin to open doors of understanding between generations. If some elders determine they will be mentors instead of overseers they may encourage the younger generation in their religious walk and participation. The church should rely on the word of God and pray for the correct course for them to follow so there will be true intergenerational closeness and worship in the church.

⁴⁶ George Barna, *Evangelism that Works: How to Reach Changing Generations with the Unchanging Gospel* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1995), 159.

⁴⁷ Barna, *Evangelism that Works*, 159.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS

This document will address the history of the Sunday school and religious education movement. It will also address the life of the Sunday school acclaimed founder Robert Raikes of England and the effect the Sunday school movement had on Protestant congregations in America which embodied family generational worship. Sunday Schools are vital to various churches as its educational branch of worship.

In 1780 Robert Raikes a Protestant English newspaper publisher decided to develop a school to promote literary achievement among the poor children of Gloucester, England. Since the children worked in factories the only day available for instruction was Sunday, the Lord's Day. Raikes believed that salvation from ignorance and illiteracy would result in better citizens. Crimes instigated by children had increased significantly especially on Sunday and Sunday school would keep the children off the streets.¹ Realizing the poverty of the children Mr. Raikes required that the children come to the school on Sunday as clean as possible. He became impressed with the depravity of the children of the working class. He informed the children that he did not reject them because they had no shoes, but argued that if they could loiter about in a ragged coat or

¹ Centenary College of Louisiana, "A Brief History of Sunday School," *The International Sunday School Lessons Plan*, accessed, October 24, 2015, [www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%](http://www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%20School) .

without shoes, they may as well come to school and learn.² By the aid of friends he bought Bibles and books for the pupils and utilized his printing press to prepare a pamphlet on the needs of the children. Then others saw the possibilities of these schools and soon a number were started.³ He employed four women to instruct them in reading and the Church catechism, which “is a manual of Christian doctrine drawn up in the form of questions and answers, especially one for religious instruction.”⁴

Through the influence of the Reformation, a wonderful impulse had been given, during the period from 1550 to 1620, to the cause of education, learning and vital religion. Its natural effect was, to produce a state of dissatisfaction with and opposition to, the Established Church.⁵ According to the author of the *History of Sunday Schools*, a large intelligent body of persons felt, that the Church was by “half reformed” and they desired for something more simple and pure; therefore they were given the name Puritans. Their profession and actions brought them the heavy arm of authority and bloody persecution. These Puritan escaped to a new land so they could breathe a purer moral atmosphere and obtain a more perfect religious freedom.⁶

The Puritans wanted to the freedom to worship God in a primitive and Christian simplicity so they left their own, native land, and sought an asylum in the wilderness of America where all was fresh and new, and where the great advantage of beginning well was

² William Cornell, *Life of Robert Raikes: The Founder of Sabbath Schools* (Boston, MA: Henry Holt, 1960), 18.

³ Henry Frederick Cope, *The Evolution of the Sunday School* (New York, NY: Eaton and Mains, 1911), 48.

⁴ Bible Study Tools, “Creeds and Confessions,” Bible Study Tools, accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/history/creeds-confessions/creeds>.

⁵ Lewis G. Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools and of Religious Education from the Earliest Times* (Boston, MA: Wm. Crosby and H.P Nichols, 1847), 189.

⁶ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 190.

secured.⁷ Dissatisfied with the church of their native land, the Puritans landed in America and brought not only their own religion but also brought the Sunday School Movement with them. The first Sunday school opened its doors in 1790 and was located in Philadelphia among the city's poor and was called the First Day Society; it taught reading, writing and the formation or moral consciousness.⁸

The Sunday School Movement

The Sunday School Movement was developed by a mere incident of Robert Raikes who had gone to hire a gardener in the suburbs of his native city, but the man was not home. While Raikes waited for him a group of noisy boys disturbed his peace. The gardener's wife explained they were present on every Sunday and her answer sparked an idea for a Sunday school for the moral and religious education of the young and this prompted Raikes into action.⁹ Robert Raikes, the son of a printer and proprietor of the Gloucester Journal was born in 1735 in Gloucester, England. He succeeded his father in business and developed a trait of benevolence. His Christian charity began as a visitor to the common prison in Gloucester; he employed those who could read and write to instruct those who could not. He wanted Christian principles to be communicated to all effectively, for he believed crime and ignorance were in the same person.¹⁰

Raikes presumed ignorance paved the way for vice, crime, immorality and poverty in the ghettos of Gloucester. He established a program to work with prisoners

⁷ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 190.

⁸ Centenary College of Louisiana, "A Brief History of Sunday School," accessed, October 24, 2015, [www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%](http://www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%20School) .

⁹ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 133-134.

¹⁰ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 135.

after their release, but concluded after years that he was addressing the problem too late. He concluded that the starting point was children and therefore he established the first Sunday schools for them.¹¹ He wanted to reach those children of Gloucester who were as young as eight who worked six days a week in the mills and factories. The concerned benevolent printer believed that the unruly factory working children whose only day of freedom was Sunday while their parents were relaxing were prime candidates for Sunday schools.¹²

Raikes described his program as botanizing in human nature as it was not intended as a tool of the local church. He was concerned about rescuing the dregs of society, having concluded that ignorance was their greatest liability. Raikes envisioned a program that would teach children to read and write, and have instruction in morals and manners. He may not have realized it but relying upon the Bible as his textbook was probably his secret success.¹³

The Industrial Revolution was a period in which essential changes occurred in textile, metal manufacturing, the economic policies, transportation and the social structure in England changed the methods of performing things. The changes that occurred during this period (1760-1850), in fact, occurred gradually. The year 1760 is

¹¹ Michael J. Anthony, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2001) 337.

¹² Anthony, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary*, 337.

¹³ Anthony, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary*, 337.

generally accepted as the eve of the Industrial Revolution; in reality the Revolution eve began more than two centuries previous to this date.¹⁴

As the Industrial Revolution developed men and women in many parts of Britain progressed from Raikes' negative aim of preventing the growth of juvenile delinquency on Sundays to the positive concern to teach children to read; many teachers were paid to teach writing also. Religious leaders disliked the teaching of writing in Sunday schools.¹⁵ Nevertheless the movement exposed the need for schools for all children. As others opened day schools, Sunday school teachers concentrated more on teaching Bible Studies.¹⁶

There were other forerunners of the Sunday School Movement; many taught just boys as Raikes had done. Some of those forerunners were acknowledged by Lewis Pray. They were: Rev. Theophilus of Catterick who in November 1963 took charge of his vicarage and regularly officiated twice on Sunday; during the intervals he catechized the young people and taught them the Bible. Later a Mr. Lindsey received different classes of young men who formed a large circle around him, holding a Bible giving it regularly to each boy to read the passage which kept the boys attentive and then asked them questions.¹⁷ Miss Catherine Harrison Cappe admired a school and tried to imitate the school in her residence where she gathered several poor children and assisted them in learning to read, giving them books and teaching the catechism together with devotional

¹⁴ Joseph Montagna, "The Industrial Revolution-Yale University," The Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, accessed November 25, 2015, www.yale.edu/ynti/curriculum/units/1981/2/81.02.06xhtml-42k-cached.

¹⁵ John M. Sutcliffe, ed., *A Dictionary of Religious Education* (London, UK: SCM Press LTD, 1984), 333.

¹⁶ Sutcliffe, ed., *A Dictionary of Religious Education*. 333.

¹⁷ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 130.

hymns.¹⁸ Miss Hannah Ball assembled thirty or forty children on Sunday morning and heard them read the Scriptures and repeat the Catechism and Collect, prior to going to church. Mr. James Hey began to instruct the poor bobbin boys in spelling and reading. There was no place of worship in his vicinity so Mr. Hey would meet them on a Sunday so they could pursue their studies without interruption.¹⁹ Pray remarked about these forerunners of Sunday schools:

The same thought had gleamed upon other minds before the time of Raikes-upon Borromero, in Milan; upon Alleine, Lindsey, Cappe, Ball, Heys, and Simpson, in England. But these were like the gleams of midnight lightning. They shone but for a moment and disappeared, or their light extended not beyond one diocese, one town or one church. But as Grimke of South Carolina remarked, in his address on the same occasion, “Robert Raikes founded them for the church universal. His institution is destined to be coextensive with the habitable globe, and durable as Christianity herself.”²⁰

As the Sunday school movement was advancing rapidly, Robert Raikes’s religious characteristics was not overlooked. He held to a high faith and to a conscious of the presence of his Father at all times. He seems to have been what one would call a practical minded Christian. He expressed his faith in his works.²¹ Michael Anthony remarked: Changes occurred in the first decade of Sunday schools. Once Queen Charlotte became a supporter of Sunday schools, it became much more fashionable, and the upper class began getting involved. Persons such as John Newton (slave trader turned preacher), William Cowper (poet and hymn writer), and theologian Thomas Scott supported

¹⁸ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 131.

¹⁹ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 132.

²⁰ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 133.

²¹ Cope, *Evolution of the Sunday School*, 56-57.

Raikes's program.²² Soon curriculum materials were published and distributed by the Society for the Support and Encouragement of Sunday schools in the different counties of England. This was followed by the London Sunday School Union, which printed guidebooks for teachers and a curriculum for instruction. John Wesley also played a key role in promoting Sunday schools as an integral part of his revival movement and subsequently as a key element in the growth of Methodism.²³

Raikes's Sunday School Movement grew from approximately fifty to one hundred students in four years to 250,000 students. After fifty years more than 1,500,000 students were attending Sunday schools in England and was the only education experience for many students.²⁴ From the mind of a concerned individual who wanted to improve their lives of some poor unruly boys by teaching them to read and catechize them, a movement began that assisted over a million students within a half-decade. It was stated that Raikes was God's man for his time. When he died in 1811 he was mourned throughout the land as few kings have been mourned, and at his funeral he left each child who attended one shilling and a plum cake.²⁵

Raikes' Sunday School Movement had spread throughout England prior to his demise and continued to increase, crossing the ocean into a new land. Religion pure and undefiled was what the people sought in the wilderness of America. Next to religion they valued learning and it was their object to secure these things as a legacy to their children

²² Anthony, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary*, 337.

²³ Anthony, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary*, 338.

²⁴ Anthony, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary*, 338.

²⁵ Anthony, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary*, 338.

and through them to their latest posterity.²⁶ Immediately after landing and attending to their own safety and subsistence, the Massachusetts Colony settlers provided for the ministry. Immediately after the ministry there was provision made for the education of the children and Brother Philemon Pormont became the schoolmaster.²⁷ Life continually changed after the Industrial Revolution and other events of the era. The Protestant religious experience may be understood as a series of events and circumstances interwoven by accidents of political and religious history which combined to form a tapestry of traditions ranging from Roman Catholicism, Anglican and Episcopal churches to nonaffiliated fundamentalist sect and cults on the right and Unitarianism on the left.

The Protestant Movement indicated that people wanted change because they wanted to worship differently.²⁸ Hopson and Openlander discussed the Roman Catholic Church's being a dominant institution by stating: "The Roman Catholic Church had been ideally suited to life in the Middle Ages when a dominant institution provided a sense of coherence for a culture characterized by bare existence and illiteracy vulnerable to social breakdown. The church was dominant in political matters in Medieval life and thought were dominated by religion. The Renaissance reintroduced classical thought and society began to undergo rapid change; de-emphasizing the community."²⁹

The growth of Christianity was threatened by internal problems; corruption was rampant among the hierarchy of the Roman Church. Purchasing of religious authority by regional monarchs was an aspect of corruption. Legitimization of the political authority

²⁶ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 190.

²⁷ Pray, *The History of Sunday Schools*, 191.

²⁸ Ronald E. Hopson and Kurt Openlander, "Protestantism and Religious Experience," in *Handbook of Religious Experience*, ed. Ralph W. Wood (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1995), 49.

²⁹ Hopson and Openlander, "Protestantism and Religious Experience," 49-50.

was laid at the foot of the church particularly in Europe. This is the context in which the Protestantism protest emerged.³⁰ The need for change was raging in the hearts of many people.

The beginning of Protestantism was regarded as Martin Luther's challenge to the church hierarchy. Luther studied theology after his near brush with death and taught theology at the University of Wittenberg where his journey to Lutheranism began. He invited a debate on the issue of indulgences in the usual manner of posting a challenge to the disputed practices and it was regarded as the beginning of Protestantism.³¹

For 50 years the Protestant Movement continued in most of Western Europe; furthered by the work of Huldreich Zwingli and Jean (John) Calvin. Luther's objections were spread by the assistance of the printing press invention and led to unrest in the peasant classes. Protestantism outside of German and Scandinavia was assisted by John Calvin who influenced Reformed Church leaders in France, Poland and England and Protestantism was spread.³²

Although all the major variations of Protestantism on the European Continent were represented in the colonies, there was not a plurality of religious people for two hundred years.³³ In the seventeenth century, some Baptists immigrated along with the Puritans to North America from England and the Netherlands. The first Baptist church in America was established by Roger Williams on Rhode Island in 1639. Baptist churches later spread

³⁰ Hopson and Openlander, *Protestantism and Religious Experience*, 50.

³¹ Hopson and Openlander, *Protestantism and Religious Experience*, 50-51.

³² Hopson and Openlander, *Protestantism and Religious Experience*, 51.

³³ Hopson and Openlander, *Protestantism and Religious Experience*, 54.

across the United States.³⁴ The first American Sunday school opened its doors in 1790. It was called the First Day Society and was located in Philadelphia among the city's poor. According to Pray, a meeting was held in the city of Philadelphia in December, 1790 for the purpose of taking into consideration the establishment of Sunday schools for that city.³⁵ At that meeting a constitution was adopted for "The First Day or Sunday School Society." On January 11, 1791, the officers were elected and the society fully organized and Bishop White elected the first president. Sunday schools were fully recognized as a teaching establishment of many churches.³⁶

Other Sunday schools were organized; a Sunday school was organized in 1797 at Pawtucket, Rhode Island and in 1803 one was established at Hudson, New York. In 1812 a Sunday school was established in Beverly, Massachusetts, the first one in Boston. Information regarding other schools that were established before the First Day Society schools were several schools or classes of religion instruction meeting on Sundays.³⁷ These classes and schools were pattern after Robert Raikes' plan. William Elliot taught each Sabbath afternoon he instructed the white boys "bound out" to him and the girls in his charge together with his own children. Soon the children of neighbors and friends were admitted. The Negro slaves and servants were similarly taught at another hour. All were taught the rudiments of reading in order that they might be able to read God's Word for themselves.³⁸ The Bible was practically the only textbook in the school. This school in 1801

³⁴ J. Gordon Melton and Martin Baumann, eds., *Religions of the World: A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Beliefs and Practices, Volume 1: A-C* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2002), 129.

³⁵ Pray, *History of Sunday School*, 205.

³⁶ Pray, *History of Sunday School*, 205

³⁷ Arlo Ayres Brown, *A History of Religious Education in Recent Times* (New York, NY: The Abingdon Press, 1923), 49.

³⁸ Brown, *A History of Religious Education*. 48.

was transferred to Burton-Oak Grove Methodist Church, in Accomac County, Virginia; Mr. Elliot became its first superintendent when the school transferred to the Methodist church.³⁹ A school of religion for slaves was established by Frances Asbury in 1786 in Hanover County Virginia in the home of Thomas Crenshaw. In 1790 the Methodist Conference in Charleston gave official recognition to such school.⁴⁰

One of the first Protestant denominations to embrace the Sunday School Movement was the Methodist Episcopal Church. The Methodist Church formed its own Sunday School Union in 1827 and established schools for the poor and frontier children while creating church schools for church members. By 1860 churches and Sunday schools were merging; focus was placed on Christian instruction.⁴¹ Memorizing Biblical text and doctrine was also stressed by the Methodist Episcopal Church and it also maintained the emphasis on evangelization. The American Sunday School Union was formed in 1824 in Philadelphia and it sought to establish Sunday schools in every destitute place where practical throughout the Mississippi Valley. It increased focus on evangelization and teaching the bible.⁴²

The Early pioneers continued to recognize the importance of religious education and began to teach their slaves. The churches of today need to also recognize the importance of religious education for everyone. The religious education acquired in Sunday school enhances ones knowledge of God.

³⁹Brown, A History of Religious Education, 49.

⁴⁰ Brown, A History of Religious Education, 49.

⁴¹ Brown, A History of Religious Education, 4.

⁴² Centenary College of Louisiana, "A Brief History of Sunday School," accessed, October 24, 2015, [www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%](http://www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%20School) .

Following the Revolutionary War many Protestant Episcopal Churches established “Colored Sunday schools.” The Christian Story was taught orally for most of society thought it dangerous to teach slaves to read and write. The church saw their purpose for these schools as evangelization of the slaves, only certain verses of the Bible were recommended for slave instruction. There were to no references to freedom.⁴³ Bishop Capers of the Methodist Episcopal Church wrote a catechism for “colored persons.” After the Civil War most white oriented “Black Sunday schools were abandoned by both blacks and whites. In 1863 the International Sunday School Convention sought black religious leaders to design a new Sunday school for blacks. Four planners emerged: L.B. Maxwell, Silas X. Floyd, G.B. Marcus and James E. Shepherd.⁴⁴

Early in the history of the Bible studies, and Sunday schools, Christians were aware of the importance of God’s word. Bible studies began with young boys, then went to girls, then slaves, then to men, and finally to women. The movement for adult classes in the United States developed in the Sunday school; many schools had these classes designated as Bible Classes. They consisted of elderly ladies and gentlemen who took more interest in theory as to the interpretation of Daniel.⁴⁵

In 1903 the teachers of several large adult classes in Chicago met and planned to organize a men’s Bible class union, but later determined to make the adult class-work a regular department of the activities and included classes for both men and women. At the

⁴³ Centenary College of Louisiana, “A Brief History of Sunday School,” accessed, October 24, 2015, [www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%](http://www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%20School) .

⁴⁴ Centenary College of Louisiana, “A Brief History of Sunday School,” accessed, October 24, 2015, [www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%](http://www.centenary.edu/Academics/religion/dotto/rel.203/Sunday%20School) .

⁴⁵ Cope, *Evolution of the Sunday School*, 174.

County Convention the plans were carried out. The same year the organization was carried up to the State Convention and organized the state department of adult classes.⁴⁶

The Sunday School Society essentially a Baptist initiative was founded in 1785. It was the fruit of the fertile mind of William Fox, a deacon at Abraham Booth's Prescott Street Church. He wanted to universalize Raikes useful experiment in Gloucester.⁴⁷ Fox met with several men who were Baptist. Henry Keene wanted to keep the organization Baptist, but Fox wanted everyone in the world to read.⁴⁸

The new society sought to bridge the divide between church and dissent with a committee of equal numbers of churchmen and dissenters. At this stage the work was to be Bible-based including all catechisms. As in the north of England with the great municipal endeavors, Sunday schools became United Evangelical Protestants together in common enterprise. Women were provided opportunities in the Sunday School Movement to be involved in church missions.⁴⁹

Robert Hall a minister in in Cambridge, Leicester and Bristol sought throughout his ministry to help Baptist churches make an adequate response to the impact on denominational life of both the Evangelical Revival and the fundamental social changes occasioned by industrialization.⁵⁰ The importance of religious education was discussed by Briggs,

⁴⁶ Cope, *Evolution of the Sunday School*, 175.

⁴⁷ John H. Y. Briggs, "The Baptist Contribution to the Sunday School Movement in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Sunday School Movement Studies in the Growth and Decline of Sunday Schools*, ed. Stephen Orchard and John H. Y. Briggs (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2007), 43.

⁴⁸ Briggs, "The Baptist Contribution," 43.

⁴⁹ Briggs, "The Baptist Contribution," 44.

⁵⁰ Briggs, "The Baptist Contribution," 44.

Religious education was especially important because it both provided ‘an authentic discovery of the way to salvation’, and supplied ‘an infallible rule of life.’ Once readers had overcome the distortion of truth brought about by human sin, the scriptures, duly read, revealed the mind of God, often alluded to by Hall in the rather remote language of the Supreme Being, which underlines the consonance of his thinking with the rationality of the age. Nevertheless abstract learning on its own offered an insufficient goal, so Hall stressed the importance of Sunday School Scholars understanding ‘the necessity of the agency of the Spirit, to render the knowledge they acquire practical and experimental.’ Thus the imperative for Sunday school teachers with regard to their scholars was, ‘Lead them to the footstool of the Savior; teach them to rely, as guilty creatures on his merit alone, and to commit their eternal interests entirely into his hands. Let the salvation of these children be the object, to which every word of your instructions, every exertion of your authority is directed. Teaching thus became an inescapable part of Christian mission, therefore members were obliged to participate; defined as the obligation ‘to bring one’s own knowledge of the supernatural into vital relation with natural knowledge’ already possessed by those being taught⁵¹

The teaching lessons in the Sunday school are part of the church’s Christian Education Program; this enlightens a person’s knowledge and prepares the person for the worship experience. Lora Ellen Mc Kinney stated that Christian Education is, above all else, a process that helps a community of believers understand theology, learn Christian history, reinforce personal decisions to live for Christ and make commitment for outreach ministries.⁵² People join the church for a variety of reason, including the ability to be part of a community of like believers, to worship God, to learn the teachings of Christ and to gain guidance for their lives. She further affirms that we Christians long for a system of beliefs and values that will help cope with injustice, affirm human dignity, hope for a brighter future, and navigate a safe and satisfying course through life. Christ provides this for us.⁵³

⁵¹ Briggs, “The Baptist Contribution,” 59.

⁵² Lora-Ellen McKinney, *Christian Education in the African American Church* (Valley Forge: PA., Judson Press, 2003), 2.

⁵³ McKinney, *Christian Education in the African American Church*, 2.

The modern day churches should consider a Family Church Concept, which in reality is a mentoring program where an adult is aligned with a child or another adult to introduce them to the programs and activities of the church so they do not feel alienated in a new Christian community. Mentoring is teaching and sharing. Sharing our life stories about our walk with God can strengthen a member of the church and that is part of teaching, learning and worship.

According to Cully and Cully, worship may be defined as the human response of adoration, praise and supplication to the being and mighty acts of God usually in the context of those who have gathered together in a community of faith. Worship comprehends the most intimate personal approach to God as well as the common prayer of the church. True worship seeks what is truly holy; this quality of the divine forms and illuminates human life.⁵⁴ Sunday School and the Christian Education of the church prepare the hearts and minds of believers to share their knowledge of God in a community space and atmosphere of worship. According to the Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education:

Traditionally the worship service has been understood as a dialogue between God and human beings. The congregation enters the sanctuary and is reminded of God's holiness. They bow down to Him, confess their sin, sing His praises and exalt His name. Then God, in response to His people's obedience, speaks to them through His word. Worship is not simply a gathering to reminisce but an encouragement toward obedience and service. A Christian should walk away from this dialogue changed. The adage "the family that prays together stays together" is proven true as many families conduct a time for focus on the Lord in the home. Parents engage in various activities of worship at home. Children will grow in appreciation of God through family worship.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Iris V Cully and Kendig Brubaker Cully, eds., *Harper's Encyclopedia of Religious Education* (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1990), 697.

⁵⁵ Michael J. Anthony, *Evangelical Dictionary*, 731-732.

Every child that enters the church does not come from a Christian home; some may come with a friend and others come curious as to what is going on in that building where all the people are entering. The church at various times must become the absentee family, demonstrating the love of God by teaching mentoring a child or person spiritually and socially. The Sunday school and the Christian Education Department of the church are the central elements for achieving this. We are the body of Christ, therefore we are family in the church and when one needs assistance, we offer our help in love. This is teaching of the Sunday schools.

To worship God touches upon those things essential to our humanity, memory, praise and thanksgiving, telling the truth before God and neighbor, forgiving and receiving forgiveness, feeding and being fed, being healed and reaching out to others, interceding and offering ourselves to God for the sake of others. Times, places, songs, words and rituals that are set apart from our everyday ordinary lives thus point to the mystery of authentic worship: the ordinary becomes the bearer of the extraordinary. Our everyday acts of speaking and listening, touching, feeding, working and resting can themselves become bearers of the holy when seen in light of their transformation in worship. This is especially prominent in the meaning of the Christian sacraments, where ordinary things such as bread, wine, water, oil, or the touch of human hands become “means of grace”, the very manner of God’s self-giving to us. Worship is a rehearsal of who we are to become in God.⁵⁶

The more we read and are taught the word of God and develop an awareness and/or relationship with Him the more enlighten we become of who He is. Many young people are introduced to God through Sunday school. People who do not attend church during their early years often develop an awareness of God through an Adult Bible school or Bible study. Both Bible school and Bible study are learning atmospheres where God’s commandments are taught and knowledge is intensified.

⁵⁶ Cully and Cully, eds., *Encyclopedia of Religious Education*, 698.

Conclusion

Robert Raikes's encounter with some noisy poor children as he awaited a gardener spawned the Sunday School Movement. He believed that if he educated the poor children with high morals they would improve their life and their behavior. Utilizing his printing press, he received assistance in developing classes on the only day the working children had freedom; that was Sunday morning. The Sunday School Movement made its way to America and became an activity of various denominations including the Baptist. Many Baptist churches in the Black community enhanced the lives of children and adults by advancing their Christian knowledge as well as their increased their reading skills.

The Sunday school in the Black church and community has played and is playing a vital role in the lives of blacks in the United States. In the late 1700s through the 1800s these Sunday schools were basic settings for teaching slaves to read and write and existed for the purpose of assisting the Africans to accept their slave status for who had been transplanted in America from Africa.⁵⁷ This trend changed and blacks began to reinterpret the gospel and the task of the Sunday school, thus giving birth to many local congregations. This trend changed, and blacks began to reinterpret the gospel and the task of the Sunday school, thus giving birth to many local congregations. The above factors pointed to the recognized need for blacks to teach and enable persons to increase their knowledge of the Bible and of the everyday occurrences in life.⁵⁸

Sunday schools developed a thirst for increased knowledge of the Bible and Religious and Christian Education classes developed as a result. Each denomination handled

⁵⁷ Mary A. Love, "Musing on Sunday School in the Black Community," in *Renewing the Sunday and the CCD*, Campbell Wyckoff, ed. (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1986), 155.

⁵⁸ Love, "Musing on Sunday School," 155.

their Christian Education department differently. The goal of education of any kind is to nurture in students an understanding of concepts, themes, philosophies and facts, hopefully with an expectation that this knowledge will be applicable to their lives.⁵⁹ Christian education has a similar goal with one notable exception: It is an educational process that produces Christians. Christian education seeks to develop in its learners a strong belief in, dedication to and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The Great Commission is affirmed by Sunday schools in the black church and most persons in this setting are willing to study and learn and to tell and teach others as they fulfill the charge.⁶⁰ This teaching enables and empowers the disciples to go and convince others likewise to become followers of the Way. This brings in the dimension of evangelism because many who were unchurched had accepted the call after being led to Sunday school.⁶¹

To be effective Christian Education requires the commitment of the entire church—pastors, and lay leaders, ministry participants and members of all ages, to an intentional program of learning about and for Christ. Christian discipleship, like learning, is a lifelong process requiring commitment to taking in new information, placing it in the context of one's life, and applying its principles on a routine basis.⁶² Sunday schools jointly with their church's Christian Education Programs equip persons to find a common ground in their Christian walk and spiritually transform them. Christian education binds the generations into community. In the congregations, elders, those who are young in age and faith, discover clues to the meaning and power of events central to the identity and

⁵⁹ McKinney, *Christian Education in the African American Church*, 3-4.

⁶⁰ McKinney, *Christian Education in the African American Church*, 3-4.

⁶¹ Love, "Musing on Sunday School," 159.

⁶² McKinney, *Christian Education in the African American Church*, 13.

mission of the church.⁶³ Through the youth, the elders envision the community's continuity and renewal. If church education is not intensely intergenerational the "continuity" of its vision, value, and perception cannot be maintained over time or renewed for changing circumstances.⁶⁴

Robert Raikes's Christian act of teaching poor boys transformed a religious community in two countries, the United Kingdom and in the future country called the United States of America. His benevolence crossed denomination lines and has inspired and spiritually transformed children and adults to be morally conscious individuals. His dream has resulted in more Sunday schools, the development of Christian Education Programs and Sunday School Unions and Associations. These events have resulted in more spiritually aware humans who seek to lift others up and allow generations to worship together. Christian Education and workshops can prepare the elders of the church to extend their hands to a younger generation so that the younger generation can understand how to follow God for their life.

⁶³ Charles R. Foster, *Educating Congregations: The Future of Christian Education* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006), 62.

⁶⁴ Foster, *Educating Congregations*, 62.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

The conveyance of God's Word and the sharing of one's faith in God to the next generation through teaching and mentoring is the theological foundation for this project. This interchange will bring change and spiritual transformation to a church's congregation which will stimulate intergenerational worship. Practical Theology/Pastoral Theology in collaboration with the Doctrine of the Church will be used to help to focus the church, its pastor and members on the teachings of God. The church will become aware of its responsibility to prepare the future generations to know and serve God. Awareness brings change; therefore the church will be able to live what Psalm 145:4 says: One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts."¹

According to Alan Richardson and John Bowden Practical Theology is concerned with the interaction of belief and behavior, but this discipline was previously concerned with ministerial formation. The content of Practical Theology was homiletics, liturgiology, and pastoral theology. The authors reported two significant developments in

¹ Marshall Shelly, ed., *The Quest Study Bible, NIV* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), Psalm 145:4.

Pastoral Theology: first ministerial formation must include theory; and second a critical theological reflection on Christian practices.²

Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright define Practical Theology as an umbrella term used to relate theology to the practice of ministry. They write that its subject matter is preaching, worship, liturgy, and education, with catechetical and pastoral care. The authors assert that churches house people of all cultures and members relate to each other within various age groups.³ Both authors are correct in their statements regarding Practical Theology containing theory and practices of ministry. All churches are a melting pot of various beliefs and behaviors. Interaction with other believers can lead to enhanced relationships. This can be accomplished under the auspices of a good leader's teaching and preaching. It is God's commandments to all generations of the church. Teaching should be a major focus of the church.

In the book *From Strength to Strength: Shaping a Black Practical Theology for the 21st Century*, the author, Robert Smith, discusses practical theology as the discipline within the academic theological curriculum. The author further states that worship, preaching, Christian education and Church government are concerns of practical theology as it was undertaken by clergy in fulfilling their duties in the church.⁴ As Jesus instructed the apostles, the first ministers of the Gospel, today's ministers are also responsible to lead the worship, preach, teach and take care of the followers. The church that wants to

² Alan Richardson and John Bowden, eds., *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1983), 455-456.

³ Sinclair B. Ferguson and David F. Wright, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1988), 525.

⁴ Robert London Smith, *From Strength to Strength: Shaping A Black Practical Theology for the 21st Century* (New York, NY: Peter Lang, 2007), 30.

continue in the way of the Lord must realize the importance of the pastor unifying people, as well as teaching and preaching the gospel. The pastor must also realize that he or she is responsible for bridging the gap between all the generations of the church. In comparing Practical Theology to Pastoral Theology we will be looking at several writers. The term Pastoral Theology derives from the Latin word for shepherd; hence pastoral theology is the theology of shepherding or the work of ministry. Pastoral theology defines the duties and functions of those ordained in ministry.⁵

Pastors are expected to care for the congregation as flocks of God and the community that surrounds the church. This will include all the people's social, cultural and communal contexts. Donald McKim described Pastoral Theology as dealing with the relationship between the word of God and the Christian lives of God's people.⁶ The church should be aware that the responsibility for the care of the membership is placed at the feet of the pastor and the body of Christ. The pastor must remember that the congregation is all age groups and must seek assistance in addressing all their needs. The congregation is responsible for one another. Studying and understanding the words of God brings a faith community (church) together. One must know the word to teach the word and a congregation must be taught. If the next generation is to be taught, the current generation must know and be obedient to God's commandment to teach the generation behind them.

In the book *Introduction to Theology*, Owen Thomas and Ellen Wondra write about the doctrine of the church. They discuss how the church is the bridge between what

⁵ Richardson and Bowden, eds., *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, 428.

⁶ Donald K. McKim, *The Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 230.

the Church's nature and purpose calls for it to do and what the members of the church and its members do.⁷ The authors are correct in stating that the church is called to be a bridge between what the church is supposed to do and what it actually does. The church is God's representative to deliver the word to the unsaved while assuring that the saved are living what they have been taught.

Theological Body

Teaching God's Children is not a new concept in the body of Christ. The requirement to teach the future generations was given to the Israelites by Moses who taught the decrees and laws as God commanded Him. Moses cautioned the Israelites by stating: "Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them."⁸ We are to constantly teach each generation; the scriptures state that we are responsible for two generations behind us. Unfortunately many churches are not teaching the generations behind them even when they stay in church or show up. The church does not seek to accommodate them rather they want the younger generation to blend in.

In his book *Christian Theology An Introduction*, Alister McGrath says, anyone who is considering pastoral ministry would find the Christian doctrine of the church usually "referred to as ecclesiology (Greek: *ekklesia*)" essential. Any person who will lift up the word of God to the church has a variety of persons of all different ages and

⁷ Owen C. Thomas and Ellen K. Wondra, *Introduction to Theology*, 3rd ed. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Publishing, 2002), 257.

⁸ Shelly, *The Quest Study Bible*, Deut. 4:9.

personalities with a multiplicity of concerns.⁹ McGrath describes the following elements of the church: It is a spiritual society; all Christians are made one in Christ despite their different origins and backgrounds; the church is the place where we seek Christian teaching and the faithful gather from everywhere at the church to grow more holy and in faithfulness.¹⁰

To better understand the purpose of the church, one must ask, “What is the Church?” Who are the members of the faith community? The body of believers is called members of the church; each member has a responsibility to each other in the faith community. Each denomination has a definition of what it believes the church to be. A church is a congregation of Christ’s baptized disciples that acknowledge Jesus as their Head. They look to Jesus to be their atoning sacrifice. The Church depends on the Holy Spirit for sanctification, obeying ordinances and precepts. The church meets together for worship and the extension of Christ’s kingdom in the world.”¹¹ The church is various things to various people. Some people see it as a spiritual center, some see it as the extension of their family and others see it as a safe harbor all gathered to worship God.

According to Karl Adams, the German Theologian the Church is infused with the redeeming power of Jesus and is so inseparable that Paul called Christ the Head of the body. As the Head of the body, the church has an intimate connection to Christ which is a reflective image of a marriage, (Christ and the Church) a language inspired by several

⁹ Alister E. McGrath, *Christian Theology: An Introduction* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994), 405.

¹⁰ McGrath, *Christian Theology*, 406.

¹¹ M.L. Moser, *Baptist Doctrine in One Year* (Little Rock, AK: The Challenge Press, 1960), 13.

prophets.”¹² Though Karl Adams is correct in saying that the church is filled with the liberating ways of Jesus, it has failed the young adults as to how to grasp those emancipating ways. The church, today has not addressed the needs of the next generation. It has not offered the young adults a way to view Jesus as the Head of the faith body. The church must seek ways to merge the knowledge of the generations together. Through the gathering together of individuals who have a communal belief and are baptized in Jesus, you have a church, a faith community, for they have become one in their belief. We as parishioners must pause and question whether we are passing on those beliefs to our younger generation. The building housing the body of Christ contains Christians from all walks of life in different stages of their Christian walk. The young adults are babes in Christ and need the milk of the word before they can have solid food. Though the church can have a smorgasbord of activities presented, they must remember the young in Christ and also have milk and soft food of the gospel present. Our future generation needs to be and must be fed the word of the Gospel.

John Wesley, the Anglican Minister and Theologian proclaimed in his Sermon about the church that all persons who are called by God out of the world and are united by one spirit, one hope and one baptism represent the church. We who are called have one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in them all. Being obedient to God is serving Him and being obedient to Go’s word in teaching the children and future generation as they glorify Him.¹³ Are we as the body of Christ assuring that all generations of the church are aware of One God? Frequent Christian education classes

¹² Leonhard Reinisch, ed., *Theologians of Our Time* (Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1964), 107.

¹³ Betty M. Jarboe, compiler, *Wesley Quotations* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1990), 93.

and workshops and the preaching of the Gospel will be beneficial to the church and its congregation. The preacher as the shepherd should train the adults to teach and instruct other adults both young and old including children. This instruction will enhance the church's foundation as a reservoir of obedient Bible knowledgeable Christians.

Jason Vickers, author of *Minding the Good Ground a Theology for Church Renewal*, states that Martin Luther, one of the leading persons of the Protestant Reformation discussed the church and its members by stating that: "anyone who is seeking Jesus must locate a church so that they might understand who they are looking for. The church is a gathering of people believing in Christ, seeking to live and teach with Christ in the center of the gathering. There is no true salvation or Christ outside the church."¹⁴ In revealing what Martin Luther has stated about the church, Mr. Vickers has not addressed how the future generation becomes the new believers. The church must be responsible for building a bridge between the present and the future generations that they may become the new company of believers. Too often the members of the church, the believers are disobedient to God's word and fail to share what they know with the younger generation.

The body of Christ should follow Jesus' teaching therefore it should be involved inside the church with its fellow believers and also outside in the community surrounding it. Kevin Giles, author of, *What on Earth is the Church: An Exploration in New Testament Theology*, expressed six views of what the church is. He states: the Church is the divinely constituted institution called into being by Christ himself; the church is the body of Christ; they are also the people of God, a title used by "Yahweh" for Israel; the

¹⁴ Jason E. Vickers, *Minding the Good Ground: A Theology for Church Renewal* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2011), 75.

church is only the church when it exists for others; the church is a congregation which is called to mind the local community of believers, and the all the concepts and descriptions of the church can be incorporated under the auspices of the “Christian community.”¹⁵ I agree with Mr. Giles regarding the views of the church; it exists for others and is concerned about others, but does not always pass on the teachings of God regarding acknowledging Him to the next generation so God’s goodness will always be known.

Simon Chan states: The church is called the people of God because it exists under the continuity of ancient covenant ‘I will be Your God and you shall be my people.’ This is the repeated promise of God throughout the Old and New Testaments.¹⁶ Indeed the author is correct that the church functions under the covenant of “I will be your God and you are my people.” The church stands for a variety of things for different people. It is a community of the faithful; it is referred to as the body of Christ for some and yet for others it is a reservoir of hope because of the teaching and preaching and nurturing. The Minister, Elder or leader of a church or a faith community is important for that congregation for he has the responsibility to place the people of God on the correct path of following the Lord.

As Moses, the Lord’s spokesman, preacher and leader listened to the Almighty while leading His people; today’s minister is to imitate Moses while leading God’s people. Moses was told by God to tell the people to remember Him and Moses did so. Throughout the book of Deuteronomy the Lord instructs Moses to make the people aware

¹⁵ Kevin Giles, *What on Earth is the Church: An Exploration in New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1995) 8-15.

¹⁶ Simon Chan, *Liturgical Theology: The Church as Worshiping Community* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2006), 24.

of what He has done for them and to make it known to the generations that follow them.

God tells the Israelite leader who tells the people:

Fix these words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie them as symbols on your hand and bind them on your foreheads. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days of your children may be many in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth.¹⁷

Moses, God's pastor/leader was obedient to the Master's voice and today's pastor should be also. What does it mean to be a pastor or preacher? Is preaching important?

What does it mean to be obedient to the Lord? The word pastor is a common translation of the Greek noun (Eph. 4:11) and its verb form, also the Hebrew ra 'ah, (Jer. 3:15); literally, a shepherd, one who keeps animals, (Gen 4:2), but used figuratively for those called by God to feed, care for and lead His people who are His 'flock.'¹⁸

Pastor/preacher is important in a church for the word to go forth correctly, assuming that the pastor or preacher is knowledgeable of God's word and he listens to the voice of God and follow his word. The Pastor/preachers not only preaches, but he teaches as well as trains others to teach and follow God. As the leader he should assure that the church prepares all generations.

Today many expect the pastor, preacher or minister to preach, teach, and counsel. The congregation expects the minister with the assistance of the associate and lay ministers to be obedient to God's word and lead them. If a pastor is teaching his flock then the congregation should always be teaching another generation and evangelizing, leading people to Christ. Regarding a pastor, John Calvin indicated that: "The pastor

¹⁷ Shelly, ed., *The Quest Study Bible*, Deut. 11:18-21.

¹⁸ Brand, Draper, and England, eds., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 1250.

ought to have two voices: one, for gathering the sheep; and another for warding off and driving away wolves and thieves. The scripture supplies him with the means of doing both.”¹⁹

Regarding the church, Calvin stated that, “wherever we find the Word of God surely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ, there, it is not to be doubted, is a church of God.”²⁰ John Calvin is correct in his statement that a minister should have two voices. He is also correct in his statement that where the word of God is preached and heard and the sacraments given there is a church. However the church may be in a building have scriptures, a pastor and people but is still disobedient to God’s commandments.

Is the church assuring that God stays alive with the next generation? The pastor is special to the faith community and held in high esteem by those he is leading and those who view him leading. It is believed that that the minister is following God’s commandments. Is he leading the present generation or is he reaching out to the future generation? The pastor’s job mandates that he reaches and leads all generations, not just those who started with him, but he must always be teaching and inspiring another generation.

John Calvin refers to God’s way of teaching us as: first God speaks to us outwardly by the mouth of men and inwardly by His spirit. “This he does simultaneously or at different times as He see fit. The instrument of faith is preaching.” Indeed without preaching there can be no faith. The Church maintains the truth, because in her preaching

¹⁹ John Calvin, “The Pastor Ought to Have Two Voices,” Calvin Quotes, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://calvinquotes.com/the-pastor-ought-to-have-two-voices/>.

²⁰ John Calvin, “What Constitutes a Church of God,” Calvin Quotes, accessed March 11, 2016, <http://calvinquotes.com/what-constitutes-a-church-of-god/#sthas.LASTQO1.dpuf>.

she proclaims, preserves its purity and transmits it to posterity.²¹ The church must have relevant and new ways of preaching to attract young adults and keep them in the church and teach them how to discern the voice of God.

The pastor is the leader of a congregation and that congregation or body of Christ, is often many generations. The church is all generations, states George E. Koehler, from the newly baptized infant to the homebound aged widow, and are recognized as members of the of the faith community.²² The majority of the time the minister is preaching to an intergenerational body of Christ; some congregations may have no younger members (and a few no elderly) most have two to five different generations. Ministries that are intergenerational involve participants from two or more generations. By generation we mean five broad age groups in the human life span: children, youth, young adults, middle adults and older adults.²³ With young adults abandoning the churches, preachers must entrust his associates and trained leaders to assist him in reaching those young adults to keep them in the church learning and serving God.

It is the responsibility of the older generation to teach the younger generation not just the babies, but the young adults following behind. Many times the elders of the church care lovingly for the babies but forget about them when they leave for college or get married. Moses was concerned that all generations would teach of God's love and treatment of the Israelites. We should also be concerned about our future generation. Moses constantly spoke of passing on God's goodness to the next generation so they

²¹ Charles Partee, *The Theology of John Calvin* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 43.

²² George E. Koehler, *Learning Together: A Guide for Intergenerational Education in the Church* (Nashville, TN: Division of Education, Board of Discipleship, The United Methodist Church, 1977), 10.

²³ Koehler, *Learning Together*, 8.

would not forget. Each generation has an evangelistic mandate to communicate the good news to all generations.²⁴ When the young adults who return to the church on their own to learn or increase their knowledge about God a new generation of people is created who learn about the Lord.

It is the duty of the pastor and church to create church/Sunday schools and Bible studies that address all generations. Children come into the church as a friend of a friend from schools or from homes that do not have Christian parents and may or may not be aware of what a church is about or what good Christian Education can do for someone. Their parents may not be able to help them as they are non-believers or they do not know how. Moreover, parents feel inadequate in sharing their faith with their children. Parents often have limited church-related learning experiences themselves and consequently they are uncomfortable discussing faith matters.²⁵ “Learning and sharing the faith together in planned multi-aged events can give parents experiences that help them feel more comfortable with learning and sharing their own children in spontaneous sharing opportunities.”²⁶

The purpose of Christian education is to teach and prepare everyone about God, prepare to serve God and remind them what God has done for them. It also prepares them to share their view of Christ with others. Christian Education which includes Bible study and prayer meetings is an asset for preparing young adults to return to the church and be a part of the faith community. Many of the young adults who have returned to church

²⁴ Gary L. McIntosh, *One Church Four Generation: Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2002), 198.

²⁵ Delia Halverson, *Side by Side Families: Learning and Living the Faith Together* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2002), 10.

²⁶ Delia Halverson, *Side by Side*, 10.

from college or a new position or marriage might find themselves lost at what is going on in their home church. No young adult church/Sunday school classes are put in place for the younger generation to get the needed additional instruction they crave or need. It should be the desire and gift of the elders to pass on the faith to these young adults.

The Practical/Pastoral Theology and the doctrine of the church should ensure the teaching of the next generation but often it does not. The purpose of Christian Education is to teach everyone about God and to prepare everyone to serve God and remind them of what God has done for them while preparing them to share their knowledge of Christ with others. Theologian Michael Anthony shared the purpose of Christian Education as training in life discipleship and the equipping for Christian Service. A Biblical worldview is developed to help believers think in a Christian manner in all areas of life so that they will impact society with the message of the gospel.²⁷

Christian Education is a teaching tool to help people know God but it has lost the young adults of today because it needs to be reenergized. In the African American context, Christian Education has the capacity to teach us about Christ in an African American Context through a meaningful connection with our heritage. It also debunks myths about our faith, and to teach values that apply to our lives as African Americans.²⁸ Young people who have left the church to indulge themselves in life or have married and stopped coming to church frequently need reclamation into the ways of the church. They need Bible study and church/Sunday school). They must slowly be indoctrinated into being a participant rather than being an observer. They view themselves older than the

²⁷ Michael J. Anthony, *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2001) 133.

²⁸ Lora-Ellen McKinney, *Christian Education in the African American Church: A Guide For Teaching Truth* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 3.

teenagers and yet younger than the elders. These young adults are a generation in transition, looking for their way to worship and serve God.

The children are cute and their spiritual needs are being addressed in Sunday school, the children's Choir and the junior ushers. They are taught about a dying Jesus and a risen Christ and are mentored and shaped by the elders. However there is a new generation that the elders overlooked when they returned from college or a new marriage. This generation refused to be molded and shaped into replicas of their parents and grandparents serving God. The generations become at odds with each other which leads to unmentioned strife between them. Gloria Johnson author of *Congregations and Older Adult Resources* states:

Older adults of each generation are often the carriers of certain values. They bear the responsibility of teaching, guiding and shaping lives by modeling with their own lives. They provide the foundation of our own ethical and moral values. The older generation must share their life as a Christian to help the younger generation. Each generation will continue to get older and we will look to the older generation for wisdom and knowledge. Each generation is responsible for preparing the generation behind them as they become the elders which begin at the birth of a new generation as they pass on values and knowledge. The transmitting of the community values is the obligation of the legislative bodies, the schools and the churches. The community becomes the village to raise a child.²⁹

It would be wise and valuable for the body of Christ to realize that it can achieve strong and spiritual growth between the elders and the young adults. The elders can become the ancestral village of faith teachers to the younger congregation. "The church has almost always had diversity within its congregations because salvation in Jesus Christ

²⁹ Gloria A. Johnson, "Congregation and Older Adult Resources" *Pastoral Psychology* 60, no. 1 (February 2011), 50.

is for people of every age and ethnicity (Mt 28:19; Rev.5:9).”³⁰ Once our young adults have grasped the vision, they will be able to serve more effectively.

Because of the dynamics of different households, it is difficult for a parent to share their perception of who God is with their child or children. A generational difference in the way one worships and how they worship will cause many conflicts. The young adults should have a mentor in the church that is willing to attend prayer meetings, reintroduce Church School and Bible study to the young adults in an effort to enhance their faith. “There has always been a generation gap. Rebellious youths and puzzled parents are commonplaces of life. Yet there is more to generational conflict than meets the eye.” The differences in music, entertainment, dress and politics can cover up wider social and cultural change. Generational dynamics are all the more powerful because we experience them personally in our family, at work and in our church states Robb Redman.³¹ The ten or twenty year differences often hinders the worship services because the older generation wants to sing slower hymns and the younger generation wants more gospel songs. A meeting should be called to share the music in service.

As the church teaches our young adults, the elders should use the Bible to assist them in transforming the young lives. “Reading the Bible is needed for transformation rather than for historical knowledge, literary appreciation or religious instruction. We can learn head and heart knowledge from the Bible and let it infiltrate us as we bring our entire lives eagerly, responsively and humbly to it. God offers our lives to be pierced by a

³⁰ David Green, “Generational Differences in Church,” Affinity Gospel Churches in Partnership (January 2013), 1, accessed October 24, 2016, <http://www.affinity.org.uk/downloads/Table%20Talk/Table-Talk-2013.1-Generational-Differences-in-Church.pdf>.

³¹ Robb Redman, *The Great Worship Awakening: Singing a New Song in the Postmodern Church* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass, 2002), 117.

two edged sword that divides us as it is rendered in Hebrews 4:12.”³² As the Faith Community quietly motivates the young adults into Bible study, they will lead them to the threshold of interacting with God. This takes months of training before the church can discuss how it wants to do intergenerational worship. After and during Bible study, there must be discussion about what is acceptable and unacceptable in each other’s culture and how they will strive to blend one and not blend the other and what will bring the generations together from learning together to worshipping together. Faith communities worship God in a variety of ways.

Calvin states that many churches seek to please their congregations and make up their worship. Worship seems to appear to include the formal public praise of God and attitudes or disposition of the Christians thinking and doing. He also states worship should not be cold but magnify the glory of God and set forth the benefits to believers and be the incitement to reverence God’s majesty and should have an atmosphere that moves people to a heart and mind in the showing forth of God’s praise.³³ People should bring their need to revere God with them to church and share it with others. If the music is blended; some old, some new along with a new way to teach Sunday school, the church service will be more inclusive.

Each generation of worshippers will be able to contribute something to the worship service in their own culture and blend them together for an intergenerational service. It is a difficult task to bring all the generations of a church together for an intergenerational service, but it can be done. The older generations must be flexible with

³² Richard J. Foster with Kathryn A. Helmers, *Life with God: Reading the Bible for Spiritual Transformation* (San Francisco, CA: Harper One, 2005), 22.

³³ Richard R. Topping and John A. Vissers, eds., *Calvin @ 500: Theology, History and Practice*, (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2011) 152-153.

the younger generations and hand over some of their reign of power and meet with the younger generation. The younger generation must be willing to be flexible and be patient and observe the things the elders have done and learn how they have survived and learn how they worshipped God. The pastor should be the intermediary between the generations with the assistance of younger and older lay persons or ministers. “The church is a counter-cultural community of God’s people. It has vast potential to validate the reuniting power of the Gospel. The church has a calculated occasion to nurture meaningful relationships and the community.”³⁴

Worship between generations is possible especially after bible study, readings, workshops, church school and generational meetings for the church community. Worship has its foundation in Jesus Christ, the one in whom we find both God’s self-disclosure and a paradigm for a life of worship.³⁵ In the African American Church worship is extremely important. Parents want their children to worship, although they may not know how to share with them a way to do it. It is important for the church as the body of Christ and as a Faith Community to act corporately to give simple instructions to prepare the young adults to receive the mantle of leadership for the church.

Worship must be personal yet communal. To be communal worship must give worshippers opportunities for communal expression of faith.³⁶ The church of today looking to bring the Generation X and Millennium Generations into their midst should

³⁴ Adam Sparks, “Church Family? Intergenerational Tension in the Church,” *The Theologian* (2005), accessed January 30, 2016. <http://www.theologian.org.uk/pastoralia/intergenerational.html>.

³⁵ Joseph A. Kimonchak, Mary Collins and Dermot A. Lane, *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1988), 1105.

³⁶ Richard P. Schowalter, *Igniting a New Generation of Believers*, Lyle S. Schaller, ed. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1995), 81.

pay attention and give some freedom to the wants and desire of these new young adults by allowing them some latitude in making additions and/or subtractions to the worship service. As the church elders and young adults learn to practice intergenerational worship, they will learn to evangelize together. Richard Schowalter indicated the evangelism does not always mean that the church does one on one personalize ministry. Evangelism is now being done on the internet and on social media pages. In the book *Igniting a New Generation of Believers*, the author describes the familiarity of individual seeking to belong in a group as social ministry. This social ministry is where the church meets the community.³⁷

The church must explore what it means to be a Christian Congregation, a family of believers. When the church realizes that everything about worship does not remain the same it will experience a revitalization of its faith community. It will take the cooperation of the entire church; the strong leadership of a pastor and the audacity of some church leaders and lay persons to stretch out their hands to the young adults to bring them in, listen to them and be willing to work with them. But a church dedicated to and following Christ can do it. We are an ecclesia, a gathered community, those who have been called out from among the world to be the body of Christ in this location.³⁸

Can we have an intergenerational church where and when we find middle ground among the generations in the church? Yes we can if we pause, and extend our hand to the generations behind us. We will be listening to God to teach our children and our children's children. What will it take to make this occurrence happen? We will have to

³⁷ Schowalter, *Igniting a New Generation of Believers*, 81.

³⁸ William C. Turner, *Discipleship for African American Christians: A Journey through the Church Covenant* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2002), 1.

make Jesus' words to the disciples come alive in our hearts and in our church. The church should remind itself often of who it is, who it is following and what it is united for. If the church is a congregation of Christ that acknowledges Jesus as the head, it should be following His commandments to baptize and teach all of its members for that is the commandment that He gave the disciples prior to His ascension. Jesus said: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"³⁹ The church is to be obedient to the commandments of its head.

It will take the reenergizing and the reminding of the pastor and the body of Christ to remember what Christ has said. It will take the retooling of the prayer meetings and Bible studies as well as workshops presenting relevant issues and training workshops for all members to bring spiritual transformation. The church will need to have mentorship for the younger generations as well as new teaching and readiness classes for all of the members of the body of Christ. We can revitalize the church if we continue to follow God's teaching. The church will have to deliberately reach out within each generation and discuss what worship should be comprised of. If the church is to renew itself and have the people of God to accept something different, then the elders must be willing to share with the younger generation. The young adults will learn from the elders and be able to develop their own method of worship. The elders and the generation behind them will be able to worship together. It will not be easy, but it is obtainable.

³⁹ Shelly, ed., *The Quest Study Bible*, Matt. 28:19-20.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Introduction

Churches in America have been experiencing a decline in attendance. The younger generations are not attending and some baby boomers are staying away. There are at least two generations missing from the church. According to the Hartford Institute of Religion Research more than 40 percent actually attend. More than 4000 Churches close their doors every year. Between 2010 and 2012, half of all churches in the U.S. did not add any new members. Each year two point seven million church members fall into inactivity.¹ The younger generation is especially leaving the church for they do not like their mother's and grandmother's religion. Often the younger generation attending feel left out of the worship.

The older generation often stifles the creative energy and inclusion of the younger generation. Parents want their children in church and some encourage them to attend. Upon arrival the older generation handles worship and the younger generations are observers rather than active participants. Robert P. Jones alleges that the younger Millennials become unaffiliated with their religious homes even before they move from

¹ Toni Ridgaway, "Statistics Don't Tell the Whole Story When it Comes to Church Attendance," www.HuffingtonPost.com, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/170739-statistics-don-t-tell-the-whole-story-when-it-comes-to-church-attendance.html>

their childhood homes. They are more likely than any age populations to be unaffiliated with any religion.

Millennials indicate that there are many factors that have resulted in the decline in younger generations attending church. Many activities that happen within the community and the workplace keep their interest.² There are many factors that have resulted in the decline in younger generations not attending church. Changes in society have segmented generations by age groups. Many churches are striving to address the generation gap. Faith communities are perhaps the only places where families, singles, couples, children, teens, grandparents-all generations come together on a regular interacting basis. Yet the societal trend toward generational fragments has moved into churches also.³ Many churches are striving to address the generation gap in their congregations by instituting Intergenerational Worship Services so that all age groups are participants in the one service. Those younger adults who have returned to their home church from colleges or marriages are seeking how to be active participants in their church.

This paper will look at what authors and researchers have stated about intergenerational worship and what part the pastor and faith community has in making it work. The purpose of this project is to develop a model that will assist congregations in addressing the inclusion of all generations in its churches. Researching books that acknowledge analyze and demonstrate methods of addressing the generational project will further enhance ways to proceed. The hypothesis is when the church embraces

² Robert P. Jones, "Why Are Millennials Leaving the Church?" www.HuffingtonPost.com (May 8, 2012), accessed May 5, 2016, www.huffingtonpost.com/Robert-p.jones-phd-why-are-millennials-leaving-the-church-b-1475231.

³ Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community, and Worship* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 5.

generational inclusion in prayer, worship, Bible study, education, evangelism and ministry programs, it will emerge as a vital and sustainable intergenerational congregation.

Theoretical Foundations in Ministry

Secular and religious authors have written a variety of literature on intergenerational worship. Some use scripture; others use workshops, plays and other generational meetings. With each cohort living longer, a worship service can easily house four or five generations. If the pastor has been the leader for over fifteen years the service is likely favorable toward the elders of the church who have been with him longer. When the pastor attempts to modify the service to address the needs of the younger generation and include more modern music, he is accused of selling out. The elders do not always view change positively. How does a minister direct a service with a multi-generation congregation? It is complex but achievable.

Gordon MacDonald encountered the multi-generations issue from one of his friends who believed that the church was moving too quickly from the traditional, leaving his age appropriate colleagues feeling bewildered. He alleges that a church will cease to exist if it is not welcoming the younger generation and addressing the challenges of reaching the unchurched; this will happen in a few years.⁴ John Mabrey addresses what many congregations are feeling when the younger generation joins the church. They believe changes are too rapid. According to Mabry many elders question what the younger generations want in churches? They want to belong not just observe but belong.

⁴ Gordon MacDonald, *Who Stole My Church?* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publisher, 2007), vii.

Happiness is the supreme goal of their life; it is what the Millennials are searching for more than anything.⁵ Worshipping congregations include more elders today than in prior generations because people are living longer. Before one was aware of it, there was a different culture, because of the various age differences.

According to the book, *The Church of All Ages*: “[W]e can easily understand how this change affects our congregations, as the number of older adults grows the congregation faces new challenges and opportunities for ministry.”⁶ The churches are older today because the young adults do not frequent places of Christianity like the older cohorts did in prior years. When young adults do go to church you will often find a multi-generational church where the programs are geared to the older generation.

Inside and outside the church walls, the world is changing and church leaders know they must use new strategies to be relevant.⁷ Instead of developing one model for all the churches to follow the research is making recommendations and stating that churches pick and choose. Modernity may have communicated to us to look for a model to imitate, but it is not that simple; there are hundreds and thousands of models for emerging churches. Today the generations have more funerals than weddings. In the congregations there are less blacks, browns and blonds appearing and more grey heads appearing.⁸ Churches are beginning to realize that the congregation has changed.

⁵ John R. Mabry, *Faithful Generations: Effective Ministry across Generational Lines* (New York, NY: Morehouse Publishing, 2013), 157.

⁶ Howard Vanderwell, ed., *The Church of all Ages: Generations Worshipping Together* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2008), 2.

⁷ Edward H. Hammett with James R. Pierce, *Reaching People under Forty, While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for All Generations* (St. Louis MO: Chalice Press, 2007), 5.

⁸ Dan Kimball, *The Emerging Church: Vintage Christianity for New Generations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 14.

Frequently the pastor and congregation notice the changing membership but continue to have service as they always do. Looking at various churches in many communities one sees the cultural shifts in the congregations. New pastors are faced with the dilemma of preaching and listening to the concerns of many generations. Various churches, Christian associations and conventions have addressed the concerns and some churches have attempted to be more intergenerational.

The body of Christ welcomes new members but does not know how to integrate modern technology or improve procedures to invigorate this new generation. Most frustrating is the congregation does not know how to incorporate the young adults into the policy making and program planning platforms of the church. These programs are the decisive measures of the Christian Education Program. Expenses and the church's financial bases provide challenges for the pastor and the church. Some of the real financial challenges are: Pastoral salaries and annuities; a requirement to maintain denominational ties: the pastor's gaps between retirement age and income and housing and the new standards for measuring success for the pastor, staff, committees and denomination conventions.⁹

The financial challenges for the church are: the preservation of family heritage which become more central than faith fullness to biblical teaching; creative funding beyond traditional church-based giving plans; massive overhead to sustain services valid yesterday, but become financial and leadership drains today. The current denominational and associational agencies, boards, etc., are other expenses.”¹⁰ The author is correct in his

⁹ Hammett with Pierce, *Reaching People under Forty*, 11-12.

¹⁰ Hammett with Pierce, *Reaching People under Forty*, 30.

assessment of the financial challenges of the church hindering it from addressing some of the current improvements needed for progression.

While the church is seeking new ways to get additional financial help, they ignore the younger generation, but seek their financial assistance, alienating them further from the church. Carol Merritt addresses the inappropriate acknowledgement of our young adults. She noted: “We devalue the worth of the under forty members in our churches. People who prove themselves in some manner are given church leadership roles. Usually those people have influence, time or money. Imagination, vision, potential and ideas are attributes that young people possess; however time and money are not usually what young people have.”¹¹ Adding one or two young adults to some committees may improve the church with its move into the future and alleviate the feeling of alienation that the younger cohorts possess. It is important to meet with all generations regarding the needs of the church, and the needs of its members.

Churches are often antiquated in doing worship because they are handling it as it was done in the sixties. The pastor, officers and elders must realize that they cannot do church as it has always been done because the younger generation will find solace in places of entertainment on Sundays. For the first time in history five or six generations are living side by side and their relationship with each other will determine the church’s course.¹² According to F. Douglas Powe, Jr., “Congregations seeking to change need to be intentional about how they pray. A group of dedicated people from the congregation should begin to pray for direction from God. Prayer is the beneficial way for all churches

¹¹ Carol Howard Merritt, *The Tribal Church: Ministering to the Missing Generation* (Herndon, VA: The Alban Institute, 2007), 92-93.

¹² Peter P. Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church: Understanding Congregations from WWII to www.com* (Littleton, CO: Mt. Sage Publishing, 2008), 3.

to begin; pray can transform when churches pray and are specific in asking for change and communicate with the One who can transform.”¹³ When churches begin to rely on prayer to address the needs of their intergenerational worship concerns, they will begin to assemble the various cohorts and remind them that they are following God’s commandment to teach each generation.

Gary McIntosh author of *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching All Ages in Your Church* states:

Each generation has an evangelistic mandate to communicate the good news to all generations. Psalm 145: 4 confirms one generation shall praise Thy works to another and shall declare Thy mighty acts. McIntosh identifies generations by different names: builder, boomers, busters and bridgers. He defines the builders as being comprised of three generations: G.I.s, Silents and War Babies. People born between 1946 and 1964 the author defines as boomers. The busters who he defines as a true “bust” are people who were born from 1965 to 76. McIntosh states that the generation that was born from 1965 to 1983 and sometimes identified as 1984 to 2002 are used for the Bridger’s Generation. The author further describes the generations as generations preparing to contribute to society, those studying, learning and experiencing life, those promoting their view of life, those prevailing and the seniors as those who are standing informing new generations.¹⁴

The church’s vitality is depended on churches developing healthy relationships with each generation. Generations will continue to precede each other. Parents will become grandparents, and the former grandparents will become great grandparents.¹⁵ The author is correct in his statement that churches are only healthy when the generations have a healthy relationship. It is difficult for many cohorts to accept the fact that their children are grown with children and can take a place of leadership in the church.

¹³ F. Douglas Powe, *New Wine, New Wineskins* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2012), 87.

¹⁴ Gary L. McIntosh, *One Church, Four Generations: Understanding and Reaching all Ages in Your Church* (Grand Rapid, MI: Baker Books, 2002) 198.

¹⁵ Vanderwell, ed., *The Church of all Ages*, 2.

Sometimes two or three generations are pushed aside; therefore the young have no place to grow for the elders will not relinquish the power, keeping them as an observer rather than a participant. The pushing aside of some young adults leads to many of them existing the church. They desire to be contributing members of the church as they are in society. They have talents of their own.

David Kinnaman, author of *You Lost Me* advises: “Young adults in their twenties are burning bridges that connect them to their spiritual heritage quicker than their parents. He offers six broad reasons for young adults dropping out of church. They are:

Overprotective, Shallow, Anti-Science, Repressive, Exclusive and Doubtless.¹⁶

Kinnaman acknowledges that the young adults see the church as killers of creativity and risk taking and find church boring and they see science incompatible with their faith.

Moreover, this generation sees the religious rules about sex stifling. The young adults see church as an exclusive place and they do not feel safe in the church expressing their doubt.¹⁷

The elders do not understand the young adults or their wants and question what it is that divides them. John Mabry states: “the one thing that Millennials are searching for is happiness. For this generation happiness is the supreme goal of life; regardless of the question asked, happiness is the standard against which everything else is measured”¹⁸

Baby Boomer quickly adapted to their parents religion, whether they went to work or married. As they remained in their church, they accepted what the elders handed them.

¹⁶ David Kinnaman with Aly Hawkins, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians are Leaving Church...and Rethinking Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2008), 92.

¹⁷ Kinnaman with Hawkins, *You Lost Me*, 92-93.

¹⁸ Mabry, *Faithful Generations*, 157.

Generation X and the Millennials want to be involved. They do not want Hand Outs.

Many worship services do little to entice young adults to remain in church. The worship service causes many disagreements in the body of Christ.

When Gordon MacDonald attempted to seek the answers after a friend told him the church seemed to be moving away from the old ways of doing church. He called a meeting with his congregation, had prayer meetings, generational meetings regarding the issues of the church and bible studies. He stated: “Any church that has not turned its face toward the younger generation and the new challenges of reaching unchurched people in this world will simply cease to exist; we’re not talking decades-we’re talking just a few years.” He further stated that some elders could be spiritual parents to the new generation for some of them, not all of them of course, but substantial number, are looking for people with gray hair.”¹⁹ Opening our hearts and our hands to the young adults will go a distance in helping our churches; the Christian journey is not easy and if the elders serve as mentors, not dictators our young adults might come back to the church.

The church has to intentionally want to change to incorporate all generations in the service. It is a difficult and challenging task to make the church intergenerational. Yet the work will be worth it. The values we were given is the highest motivation to continue our efforts to keep the generations in rich relationships with each other.²⁰ According to Howard Vanderwell the churches should consider these five guidelines as they begin to develop intergenerational worship. They are: “Consider all the chapters of life’s journey to be equally valuable; Avoid stereotypes; Worship planning should be age-

¹⁹ MacDonald, *Who Stole My Church?* viii.

²⁰ Vanderwell, ed., *The Church of All Ages*, 29.

inclusive; Encourage activities that prepare worshipper to be age inclusive and 5) plan periodic worship events to be inclusive”²¹

Every church must develop its own model for success with intergenerational worship, but all should begin with prayer and asking God’s direction. There are hundreds and thousands of models of emerging churches and modernity has communicated to us to take the simple one.²² Allen and Ross offer five ways to draw the generations together through worship song. They state: 1) Sing “Be With Me, Lord” but change word to sing s “Be with us, Lord”; 2) Occasionally ask two from different generations to choose the songs, 3) Sing pairs of themed songs from two or three different generations; 4) Choose a song all generations know, then ask a younger person and an older person to share what this songs means to them; 5) Occasionally include a teen or child on the worship planning team.²³

Peter Menconi also made suggestions for a church to move toward being an intergenerational community. In the book *The Intergenerational Church*, several suggestions were given for making the transition toward becoming an intergenerational community. He indicates: Frequently integrate multiple generations into the worship; schedule regular multigenerational church events; develop mentoring relationships between younger and older congregational members; develop opportunities for people of various generations to share their interest and hobbies; and create “new households”

²¹ Vanderwell, ed., *The Church of All Ages*, 29-32.

²² Kimball, *The Emerging Church*, 14.

²³ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 5.

within the church community by encouraging nuclear families to meet and relate.²⁴ The authors and research indicate that we as older body of Christian need to appeal to the young adults in some manner. Various activities have been suggested to reach out and bring the young adults in and other activities have been highlighted for keeping the young adults involved once they are in the church. We have to make them feel welcome and the older generation must release its authority over some of the ministries.

Allen and Ross best sums up why we should move our churches toward being intergenerational. They state: “Intergenerationality enables the whole church to benefit from each individual’s God-given gifts and enables believers to fully live out being the body of Christ and the family of faith. Among the many benefits for both adults and children are a sense of belonging, support for troubled families, and better use of resources, also character growth and sharing each other’s spiritual journeys.”²⁵ Even though each church must plan its own intergeneration worship service, the common thread that is running through the suggestions and guideline is the inclusion of all ages in all programs and services.

Various churches have tried alternative programs to develop an intergenerational worship service. Some churches meet with the program planner and leaders of the church, and do not include the young adults. The church should survey its congregation to ascertain how many generations are present, to determine their needs and wants, and focus on how we can merge the generations together. We as seasoned Christians cannot leave our young adult to make their Christian journey alone. Today’s churches must be

²⁴ Menconi, *The Intergenerational Church*, 201-203.

²⁵ Allen and Ross, *Intergenerational Christian Formation*, 47.

the disciples that were gathered by Jesus and received His commandment: “Go therefore and make disciples”. The churches of Jesus Christ must begin to evangelize inside and outside the church and be obedient. There was no age or generational limit on who were to be disciples. “Go”; reach out for our young adults.

Theoretical Foundation in Nursing

Issues regarding the assembling of various generations are not just church problems. There are issues in various employment sites including the nursing field. Clashing cultures tend to rise when generations want to do the activities or positions they wish to perform in the manner they wish to perform it. Problems have surfaced in various workforces where there are multiple generations. The hospitals are no exception. In the past sixty years society around us has change drastically. Male doctors and hospital administrators managed the female nurses that worked in those hospitals. However in the past several eras a different labor force has emerged. This is an innovative type of diversity, in that we think of diversity as multi-racial or multi-ethnic perspective, but the working together of different generations within the health field can be considered diversity.²⁶ The author is correct in stating there is diversity when different generations work together in the same field. This new diversity will produce tensions because each generations views doing the same position in different ways and at different times.

In today’s world for the first time four generations of nurses work together; in prior years there were three generations working together. Retirements and shorter

²⁶ Maria J. Weston, “Integrating Generational Perspectives in Nursing,” *The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing* 11, no.2, manuscript 1 (May 31, 2006), accessed May 4, 2016. http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume112006/No2May06/tpc30_116073.aspx.

lifecycles have provided people an opportunity to work past the age of 60. Nurses too are working past the usual retirement age, and are working with younger nurses doing the same position differently. Today there are four generations of nurses in the same unit.²⁷

Laura Stokowski, RN., referred to Bonnie Clipper author of *The Nurse Manager's Guide to an Intergenerational Workforce* to name the generations of nurses working today. The names given to these generations of nurse are: the “traditionalist” or “veterans”; the baby boomers; the “X generation and the “Millennials” or “Y-generation.” The author further indicates that her traditionalists are shrinking fast as the youngest in the veterans group is now seventy-one years old.²⁸

Rose Sherman also identified the four generations of nurses working today. She referred “The Veterans born between 1925-1945, whose life experiences included World War II and the Great Depression;” the Baby Boomers who were born between 1946-1964 in a healthy post war economy, who express themselves artistically and were encouraged to be individuals; Generation X born between 1963-1980 and were raised in single family homes; and the Millennial Generation born between 1980-2000.²⁹ Sherman further points out, that Generation Xers were often raised as latchkey children in single family homes because of high divorce rates, and Millennials who were raised in a time of drugs, terrorism, and violence look to families for security and accept multiculturalism as a way

²⁷ Laura A. Stokowski, “The 4-Generation Gap in Nursing,” *Nursing Perspectives* (April 11, 2013), accessed May 4, 2016, www.Medscape.com>MedscapeNurses>NursingPerspectives.

²⁸ Stokowski, “The 4-Generation Gap in Nursing.”

²⁹ Rose O. Sherman, “Leading a Multigenerational Nursing Workforce: Issues, Challenges and Strategies,” *The Online Journal of Issues in Nursing*, 11, no. 2, manuscript 2 (May 31, 2006), accessed May 10, 2016, http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/ANAMarketplace/ANAPeriodicals/OJIN/TableofContents/Volume112006/No2May06/tpc30_216074.html.

of life.³⁰ Each of these four generations have different views of life and were raised in different cultures, therefore their interpretations of life are different, so unless they are taught to value each other they will be criticizing and offending each other. The largest generations of nurses working today are over fifty years old and are from the Baby Boomer generation and new concerns arise with the numbers changing as the Boomers retire.³¹

The challenges of working with four different generations in the nursing are described by Sherman as: “beliefs, expectations, attitudes and work habits which provide generational diversity for staff and leaders.” As many nurses are living longer and not retiring at the expected ages of fifty-three to fifty-six, this age diverse nursing staff will present challenges for the nursing leader. However the diversity can add to a team’s richness if the nurses value each other’s offerings.³² All the authors are correct in stating that the age diversity in the workforce is creating a new type of diversity. There are challenges because each cohort has grown up in an era that is different from their colleague. Each nurse is accustomed to doing things their way their generation does it. However when each person recognizes that they possess unique gifts recognize the gifts of those working with them, this realization will begin to produce better working relationships and the workforce is more harmonious.

Four generations can often collide because of the different backgrounds each person possesses and their ages. Understanding and valuing the offerings of your co-

³⁰ Sherman, “Leading a Multigenerational Nursing Workforce.”

³¹ Sherman, “Leading a Multigenerational Nursing Workforce.”

³² Sherman, “Leading a Multigenerational Nursing Workforce.”

workers can produce fruitful working relationships and detract from your apprehension of your situation in the workplace.³³

In our life span health care service will be needed by all. What will happen if nurses don't work as a cohesive body to give us the best of care or are not competent? These are two questions Terrence Cahill and Laura Cima asked in an article entitled *Common Ground: Addressing General Issues in Nursing Services*. The authors state,

Tensions on the job and nursing shortages are real concerns; the major shifts in age groups and the tensions on the job aggravate the situation. Why are the age groups causing some much loudly talked concern in recent years. Who are the people in these age groups and what are the causes them not to work well in their place of employment? These are concerns for those in the nursing field.³⁴

Three major concerns are brought to the forefront as the retirement of veteran nurses happens. First according to the authors the retirements of the most knowledgeable nurse might result in the hindrance of services. Second, the millennial nurses are leaving their hospital positions readily; some are leaving the profession when they were expected to fill the shoes of the boomer nurses. Third, there will be an increase demand for health care services with the aging population without the nurses due to boomer retirement nursing shortages. As a result of these shortages in nursing, applicants will be fought over by organizations.³⁵ It is imperative that ways be found to assist the nursing profession which is experiencing some of the intergenerational issues that many pastors are facing.

³³ Cindy Mehallow, "Generational Conflict in Nursing: How to Relate to Colleagues across Generations," Monster Worldwide, accessed May 10, 2016, <https://www.monster.com/career-advice/article/generational-conflict-in-nursing>.

³⁴ Terrence Cahill and Laura Cima, "On Common Ground: Addressing Generational Issues in Nursing Services," Catholic Health Association of the United States (January-February 2016), accessed May 10, 2016, <https://www.chausa.org/publications/health-progress/article/january-february-2016/on-common-ground-addressing-generational-issues-in-nursing-services>.

³⁵ Cahill and Cima, "On Common Ground."

With pastors retiring at sixty and walking away from the profession because of burn out, often caused by striving to put life into a congregation that does not know how or want to incorporate all the generations together, the community is often left in unfortunate shape for moving forward. There is a multiplicity of information regarding the concerns of intergenerational attitudes and habits in the church and in the health profession. What we need is more information of how to address these concerns.

Rose Sherman, author of “Leading a Multigenerational Nursing Workforce,” suggests:

There is little information regarding how the age assorted workforce is being managed by the current nursing administrators. The work environment that makes provisions for the needs of each individual and values generational difference is enhanced by a nurse leader. She further contends that a profile be made of the leader’s unit, by conducting a survey that evaluates the age profile and the issues of the team. She recommends that all employees should have their needs consider as well as their generational differences, but that all employees be held to the same policies and procedures and work expectations. She further recommends that to promote an environment of retention areas such as motivating, communicating and resolving conflicts be given generational preferences.³⁶

Cahill and Cima expounded on the necessity of identifying strategies of interventions among generations with the baby boomers retiring and the millennials leaving creating job leakages in the health profession. They began by asking questions: How does one begin to address these issues? What are some intervention procedures or strategies that can be utilized? When the millennials initially arrived in the health workforce, the tensions that were caused were overlooked. Many of their peers believed them to just be young and claimed they would learn that to be successful they had to

³⁶ Sherman, “Leading a Multigenerational Nursing Workforce.”

change.³⁷ The authors further stated: organizations began to agree with generational theorists who predicted that generation-based tension would not unravel itself; therefore organizations are beginning to adopt generational interventions. Cahill and Cima also discovered nurses responding to the emotions of others have managed their own emotions springing from generational issues³⁸

The older generations of nurses were the ones who put their nose to the grind, dotted every I and cross every t, thorough people who double checked everything they did. They have no tolerance for the younger generation who does everything quickly and does not double check. Each views the other with suspicion and does not value the other's work habits nor recognize their talents. They are not patient with each other. Like the impatient people in the church, not wanting to relinquish titles and duties and accept some changes, while training others and being trained the younger generation nurses may believe that it is not worth the hassle to be a nurse and try to do the job the way another generation wants it done.

One of the first approaches that a nurse manager must do is to call an intergenerational meeting, so everyone understands his/her expectations, suggests Mehallow. Millennials are the new kids in the workforce, so they need to ask more questions and make sure what the Human Resources Department has told them is the same thing that the nurse manager wants. Each generation must be willing to reach out to one another with patience.³⁹ Based on information from Valerie Amos a manager at Northwestern Memorial Hospital, Mehallow also suggested that after the end of shift

³⁷ Cahill and Cima, "On Common Ground."

³⁸ Cahill and Cima, "On Common Ground."

³⁹ Mehallow, "Generational Conflict in Nursing."

briefing and coaching, Millennials should seek immediate feedback according to the Amos. She followed up a hospital formal preceptorship with an informal mentorship program. A high unit retention rate was obtained through open communication and informational meeting which earned Amos her staff's respect. Reviewing plans that one has implemented allows the participant an opportunity to state what they have learned.⁴⁰

The health care field needs some suggestions for improving generational relationships as well as in churches? It appears that small meetings between the generations, and mentorships are highly favored in both settings. In the health care field a communal approach is to have generation diversity training, and provide training to all employees, usually in mixed generational groups. Specialized programs are offered by some organizations to offer newly hired Millennials. Coaching or corrective action if needed is given to individuals who are problematic. Cahill and Cima recommend that the things nurses have in common be identified and accented and these attributes and attitudes will be the shared nursing identity. then the shared nursing identity will provide a strong foundation for accepting and even valuing differences.⁴¹

For the first time in decades there are at least four generations of nurses working in a hospital. Whether they are called Veterans (Silent Generals), Baby Boomers, Generation X or Millennials (Generation Y) there will issues that these different generations will disagree on. The different societal changes that happened in each of their eras effects how they see and do things. The elders in the work place and in the churches

⁴⁰ Mehallow, "Generational Conflict in Nursing."

⁴¹ Cahill and Cima, "On Common Ground."

are hesitant to lose their reins of authority on any project or program. Generational relational issues occurs because the perception of the generation occurs, but with small group meetings, conversations and mentors and much prayer there can be a bridge between the generations to allow for a pleasant working relationship.

Conclusion

There are a variety of struggles among generations because of societal changes which often leads to moments of alienation in families, in the workforce and even in the church. The struggles are the results of at least four generations working, playing, or worshipping together. There must be good leadership in both the health field and in the church. Good leadership must be able to correspond with all generations to have persons of one generation recognize the gifts and talents of the other generations. In the church and the nursing field intergenerational struggles can lead to many of the younger generations leaving their places of employment or the church. It is the obligation of nursing administrators to discover the gifts and talents of all age groups in their department and design programs that will produce a healthy environment for the various eras to work in cohesively. It is also the responsibility of the pastor and church leaders to design and plan Christian Education Program, prayer services, workshops and worship that encompasses all the generations. With the assistance of a team of members of every generation, the desires and needs of all can be discussed.

Understanding between the generations can only be addressed when each generation realizes it must give up something and let go of something. It will depend on the sharp wit of nursing supervisors and pastors to open the doors of communication

between the various cohorts so they will be able to give and share. The elders must give up some of their authority and dictates that it must be done this way and include the younger generation and listen to some of their ideas. The younger generation must give up some of their aggressiveness to take the reins so they can understand the many ways health care can be performed or the various ways the church can be done. The younger generation must also let go of their defenses that people do not want them to participate. The generations must find means to address and work with each other learning as they get to know each other. God has equipped every generation with gifts and talents. Each generation must be able to value each other and appreciate the gifts that the other has. In the churches where all are partakers with God, the elders must be able to share with the young adults and assist them in discerning God. Meetings should be established with all generations regardless of it being in the health field or the church, so that talents and gifts are recognized in every era. Then everyone regardless of age can be given an opportunity to share their gifts and talents and begin to work together and worship with one another.

CHAPTER SIX

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to develop a program that would encourage various generations to pray, study, and learn together in order to produce a cohesiveness that would develop into successful intergenerational worship. The hypothesis from which this purpose grew was that if the church embraces generational inclusion through prayer, Bible study, worship, and ministry programs, it will emerge as a vital and sustainable intergenerational congregation. Both the purpose and the hypothesis developed because of the intersection between my own experiences as a young adult in church, and the needs I was able to identify in the church I presently attend.

Having grown up in a fashionable, large Baptist church I experienced the many ways children could be included in church life. Young people were put in all the church's plays and were encouraged to be junior ushers. As there were large numbers of children in the church, there were several Sunday School classes that were grade oriented. A "baby" choir involved children in music ministry, and members of the youth usher board were viewed as cute future members of the church. As children became teenagers, the adults continued to provide programs for them, including and teenage choir.

When many teenagers left for college, or married, however, no additional attempts were made to include those who remained in the life of the church. Therefore,

many of the young people left the church. Some who did stay, remained because it was a family church, but they, too, were disenchanted and perplexed as to how to serve God with so little encouragement from the older generation of church leaders or places in which we could serve.

We were too old for the youth choir and usher board, and too young for the elders' choir and usher board. We were not viewed as competent for the trustee or Deacon boards because of our youth. Although we were often asked to assist in a program by being waiters at the church dinners or by assisting a committee to collect tickets or photocopy or perform some other trivial tasks, we were not asked, as young adults, to have any input into planning or making decisions that affected the church.

My childhood church was fortunate as we called a progressive minister about the time I turned twenty. I was preparing to leave the church, as I was unhappy and saw no reason to attend. The pastor organized a young adult choir, hiring a professional musician and choir director which prompted young adult to return to the church if for no other reason than to sing to the glory of God. However, some were not satisfied with just singing, so the issue was addressed with the pastor. Being wise he developed a junior Deacon Board program and a Mentoring program. The Reverend assigned progressive women who were involved in the church to work with some of the young people, and involve us in the ministries and programs of the church. I eventually became a Trustee at twenty-five years of age demonstrating the ability of a young adult to be trained to handle some of the administrative duties of the church.

As the older generations spoke of their relationship with God, they would usually state, "I am holding onto my God," as though God was theirs only. Because of many

circumstances in their lives they believed He had a special place in His heart for them. These elders believe they have shared their God when they sent their children to Sunday School and church, so they could be taught and hear the word. Often there was no conversation as to what transpired in church or follow up on the sermon in the home. The younger generation was left to discover God for themselves.

Erroneously many adults feel that only Sunday School and the preached word prepares one to worship God. Many people, especially Baby Boomers, accepted God through Sunday Schools, Christian Education programs, and the church. Frequently mentors supported the foundation of the church's teaching by working with certain younger members of the church. The church rarely hosted or provided a program for those who sought something different after their teenage years. The church has ignored these younger cohorts for decades and as the churches get older there are no young adults running forward to pick up the mantle of Christianity. The young adults were not taught to offer suggestions or assimilate into the administration of the church so that the Worshipping of God was shared.

In the past twenty-five years, the Sunday School which undergirded the church has lost members. Young people are not attending Sunday School and there are scant activities to attract new young adults or changes made by the molded Christians. Young adults are not that curious about what is progressing in the church unless evangelizing Christians make them aware that they are welcome. The church must realize that as the older worshippers in the congregation have to be open to the young adults reaching out their hands instead of holding onto their Christianity like they are the only ones getting saved and He only wanted them to come to Him.

The younger generation is being denied an opportunity to see the God that is praised. The elders have proclaimed God is their rock yet they have failed to demonstrate to the young adults the importance of the Rock. The elders' positions as committee and ministry leaders hinder their educating the next generation. It is time for all generations to know that we are all on this journey together. It is time for all to have conversations about how to worship together. We have feasts throughout the Christian calendar for celebrations, but none of them are for sharing our Christian experience. The protective veneer that encases our Christianity keeps God on our own personal surface rather than a faith level. We must make provisions to share God. The pastor and the administrative staff must assure that every generation is represented in the worship. This can be accomplished by intergenerational planning and implementation of a team which will allow all voices to be heard.

As a new member of Second Baptist I recognized that the young adults were sitting in the same seat I had sat in decades before, not being utilized in all facets of the Christian service. Yes, young adults can sing, and they can dance, and we readily put them in those categories. However, the church must realize that those same young adults have computer skills, financial skills, and other attributes that would move the church forward. Letting them add their music and their ideas to how the church can worship would benefit the church. I realized that some of the issues confronting the church are the lack of trust, conversations and knowledge between the generations. I sought to bring together the cohorts of the church to speak with each other and share their Christian walk as a segue into worshipping in an intergenerational manner.

Making my context more intergenerational became a mission for me because I came from the same framework where elders were asked to share with us who were younger. The church of today is losing its next generation because we are not willing to present our hand in friendship that demonstrates a welcome, “Come, let us share God.” It is conversations that begin to open doors, therefore more conversations around our likes and dislikes need to be held in church.

Methodology

The purpose of this project was to develop a program that would encourage various generations to pray, study, and learn together in order to produce a cohesiveness that would develop into an intergenerational worship. The strength of each age subgroup’s Biblical knowledge and their ability to worship differently but inclusively with each other has been examined in an effort to enhance positive methods the church can use. In order to determine if there was any interest in the possibility of a project on Intergenerational Worship and to ascertain important information about the congregation, a survey was distributed, and a Twelve Hour Bible Study was held to which all church members were invited.

Seven persons were enlisted to assist in this project and were representative of four different age groups as well as four different ministries. The age group ranged from twenty-nine years to seventy-plus years. The group consisted of two ministers, the church secretary, a member of the scholarship committee, a chair of the Youth group and two young adults. The project and the role of the Contextual Associates were explained. It was determined that we needed information regarding the congregation; the church

secretary was instrumental in providing this service and all correspondence from the Contextual Associates.

The Contextual Associates decided that the church should initially be surveyed to ascertain ages, gender, years of membership, families in the church, the need for Bible study, and their participation in Bible study. The survey also asked about their participation in the church and their attendance. This information was deemed significant and vital to move forward as it would provide generational information as well as substantial information about the participation of the congregation. The pastor, Rev. Ealey, made the congregation aware of the survey and asked them to comply. It was necessary for the pastor to present the information as the congregation followed his lead; conversely, there was some skepticism toward me, as I was new to the church. It was very helpful to have the pastor present and support participation in the survey.

Two hundred and fifty surveys, accompanied by a letter explaining the survey and giving Rev. Ealey's approval, were sent to the congregation members in October. It was important for the Research Team (the Contextual Associates, and me, as the researcher) to have information about the ages of those attending the church. Information was also needed as to who attended Bible study, their estimate of its importance in their lives, and knowledge of intergenerational worship. Only one hundred surveys were returned even after a second appeal.

The surveys revealed that there were six generations (considered the number of living generations in America today¹), worshipping in the sanctuary nearly every

¹ Jill Novak, "The Six Living Generations in America Today," MarketingTeacher.com, accessed February 16, 2017, <http://www.marketingteacher.com/the-six-living-generations-in-america/>.

Sunday.² These six generations are described by Dr. Jill Novak in her article, “The Six Living Generations in America, as: the GI Generation, born from 1901 to 1926; the Mature/Silent Generation, born from 1927 to 1945; the Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1964; Generation X, born between 1965 and 1980; Generation Y/Millennium, born between 1981 and 2000; and Generation Z/Boomers, born after 2001.”³

Each member of these generations is, of course, an individual, but, according to Novak, there are some fairly accurate generalizations that can be made about the likes, dislikes, and attributes of each group. Because they had collective experiences as they aged, they, therefore, have similar ideals. A person’s birth date may not always be indicative of their generational characteristics, but it is one very significant factor in determining the characteristics of the members of the group.⁴

The six generations indicated in the church survey range in ages from twelve to ninety-six. There are twenty-two families with three generations in the church. There are forty-six Silent Generation members, according to the survey, which is the largest age group in the church. The members of this cohort range in age from seventy-one to eighty-nine years of age. The Baby Boomers are the second largest group in the church, ranging in ages from fifty-one to sixty-nine years of age. Generation X and Y have a total of seventeen persons, and the GI generation has six vibrant and visible members among the congregants. Only one twelve-year-old responded to the survey, but there are fifteen

² The extreme age difference is engendered by three particular senior citizens and the children of the congregation. When these two groups are present, which is most of the time, the age spread in the congregation includes the six generations mentioned.

³ Novak, “The Six Living Generations.”

⁴ Novack, “The Six Living Generations.”

children who are active in the church as members of the youth ushers, the praise team, and the Sunday School.

The WWII (GI Generation) members attend regularly (nearly every Sunday), while thirty-two out of forty-six Silent Generation members attend regularly, and fourteen attend at least twice a month. Twenty-four of the Baby Boomers attend regularly and fourteen attend about twice a month. The Generation X and Y members are the present the least frequently, attending mostly twice a month. Children attend frequently with parents especially on third Sundays, when they sing and dance. The church membership indicated that many of the World War II members have sixteen to twenty-five year of membership; the majority of the Silent Generation have two to fifteen years of membership, and eleven of them have twenty to fifty years of membership. The younger generations, most of who were raised in the church have one to thirty year in the church, including the time that some of them were away at college.

Bible study was indicated as being important to the majority of the respondents, especially the three older age cohorts. The younger age cohort (Generations X and Y) favored reading certain scripture and books like the Daily Word. Some of the young adults indicated that they had Bible study at home. When asked if they considered the church intergenerational, sixty-one stated “yes,” and thirty-nine stated “no.” The majority of the respondents indicated that there was not a Young Adult Day. When questioned about a Worship service for all age groups the three elder age cohorts stated, “yes, that existed,” while the two young adult groups stated, “no.”

When asked if they would participate in an intergenerational service, the majority positively stated, “yes.” The survey revealed that the church was not aware of the various

ages in the church, and the difference between youth and young adults. However, when asked if they would serve and assist in an intergenerational Worship Service, they overwhelmingly replied, “yes.”

Reading the surveys and seeing so many who indicated their desire for intergenerational worship was very positive, but it was also clear that many did not understand what it is or how to begin to achieve it. John Roberto, in his article, “Becoming Intentionally Intergenerational: Model and Strategies,” states,

Every church can become *intentionally intergenerational*! Most churches are intergenerational or multi-generational by membership. Some are *intentionally* intergenerational. They make their intergenerational character a defining feature of their community life, ministries, and programming. These churches make it a priority to foster intergenerational relationships, faith sharing, and storytelling; to incorporate all generations in worship; to develop service projects that involve all ages, and to engage all generations in learning together. For these churches, being intergenerational is a way of life. It is an integral element of their culture. It is who they are!⁵

The author further states that,

Bringing generations together within the church provides benefits and blessings on a variety of levels. Insights from research and pastoral experience show that being intentionally intergenerational reclaims God’s intent for faith to be shared in community and across generations, [while at the same time affirming] each persona’s value in the total community (regardless of age).⁶

With the encouragement offered by Roberto, and because the membership had said, “yes,” to an Intergenerational Worship Service, suggestions began to be articulated as to how to proceed. Strength comes through knowledge, therefore several ideas developed about teaching and sharing.

⁵ John Roberto, “Becoming Intentionally Intergenerational: Model and Strategies,” *Lifelong Faith* 3.1 (Spring 2009):33, accessed February 10, 2017, http://www.lifelongfaith.com/uploads/5/1/6/4/5164069/becoming_intentionally_intergenerational_-_roberto.pdf.

⁶ Roberto, “Becoming Intentionally Intergenerational,” 33.

Using results from the surveys, the Research Team worked to bring together the church in a ministry that would encourage participants to articulate their thoughts with each other in order to learn about and from one another. A twelve-hour Prayer and Bible Study (7am to 7pm) was developed based on themes that were determined to be of importance to the church, and Biblical characters who represented those themes. The themes were chosen by the Context associates, and each hour leaders from the pastor and leaders from the various age groups presented the themes and led a discussion of specific Biblical characters/warriors.⁷ All generations, especially the leaders of the church, were invited to participate.

The length of the event allowed participants flexibility in when they would attend. Those who were retired and or finished work in the early hours could come in the morning and those who worked during the day could come after work; people could come when their schedule permitted. Everyone signed up for a time slot. The church was filled, and participants were emotional and ready to cooperate. The Surveys and the Twelve-Hour Bible Study/Prayer Day gave participants the opportunity to meet with me, as well as become better acquainted with the talents of the young adults.

After observing the congregation's attendance at the event, it seemed the participants were ready to be more fully engaged. It was suggested that a Bible study on generations working together would be supported. Since it was clear that many do not attend the Wednesday evening Bible study, it seemed important to focus on a day-time study. A group comprised of the Senior Missionary Society was already holding monthly Bible study classes on first Sundays, after Communion service. The Bible study usually

⁷ The themes and Biblical characters are as follows: Hour one—Forgiveness (

has seven or eight members from at least three generations attend. Because this study was already held at a standard time, and already comprised some intergenerational participation, it was considered a good fit for this project. With the permission of the members of the Senior Missionary Society, an invitation to listen, share, and dialog was extended to other church members, especially to the young adults.

A pre-test was given prior to the Bible study series in an effort to ascertain the participant's knowledge and understanding of God's commandment regarding obedience and teaching of future generations; the same questions, and one additional question were asked in a post-test. There were fifteen participants from four generations that participated in the pre and post-tests in the Missionary Bible Series. It was believed that the answers to the pre-test would help determine the degree of information necessary to be taught regarding a Christian's God's commandments to teach future generations. The answers to the post-test were used to determine whether the knowledge of the participants on these topics had been enhanced.

The pre and post-tests were composed of nine question on intergeneration, obedience to God, teaching generations, and intergenerational worship. The nine questions were designed to prompt the participants to contemplate whether they were adhering to God's commandments and encouraging generations to worship together. Both the pre and post-tests were designed to be answered by selecting: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. The instructions read: "Listed below are 9 statements: read them and then circle the answer that best expresses your opinion of whether or not you agree with the statement. If you do not agree or disagree or are not

sure, please circle Neutral.” These instructions were followed by nine questions on the pre-test, and the same nine statements, plus one additional statement on the post-test:

1. I am familiar with Intergenerational Worship.
2. The word states: “Obedience is better than sacrifice” (1 Sam. 15:22) therefore if I obey God by coming to Church and do nothing else He says I am totally Obedient.
3. Moses told the Israelites what God told him about teaching the generations behind him: teach the children and the children’s children therefore if we only provide teaching for the youth (3 years to 18 years) we are obedient to God’s commandment.
4. A generation is a group of people born and living during the same time.
5. When someone states that their church is an intergenerational congregation they are referring that all the members are born during the same years. (ex: 1920-1930).
6. An Intergenerational Congregation is a congregation composed of more than one generation of persons actively participating in the church from Christian Education to the Worship Service.
7. Worship in a church consists of only preaching and singing.
8. Miriam led the Israelites in singing to the Lord after the Egyptians were Killed in the Red Sea and King David danced before Lord and the Israelites after the Ark of the Covenant was returned to the Israelites and these two activities are considered the acts of worship.
9. Intergenerational Worship implies that there is more than one generation actively participating in honoring God during a service.

On Post-test only

10. This Bible Study about Generations, Obedience and Worship has provided me with new information about how to worship and serve God.

The first statement of the pre and post-tests were made in order to gauge the respondents’ familiarity with Intergenerational Worship. The first statement was followed by two statements regarding obedience, two about generations, and finally, four questions regarding the activities of worship and the participants in an intergenerational worship

service. On the post-test a tenth question inquired as to whether the lessons had enhanced their knowledge of generations and intergenerational worship.

The first question of the pre-test pursued the familiarity of the participants with the idea of Intergenerational Worship. Seventy-three percent of the respondents were familiar with it and six percent were unfamiliar, while twenty percent indicated their neutrality. The post-test indicated a twenty-seven percent increase in the familiarity with Intergenerational worship, up to one hundred percent.

Questions two and three asked about obeying God's commandment regarding teaching. Thirteen percent of the respondents for question three indicated that they agreed with teaching only the youth as being obedient, while seventy-three percent of the respondents indicated their disagreement and thirteen percent indicated their neutrality. The post-test for question two remained the same; thirteen percent agreed and eighty-seven percent strongly disagreed that coming to church only was obedient. Question three indicated that the respondents who disagreed rose twenty percent to ninety-three percent from seventy-three percent, and those who agreed declined to seven percent.

The third set of questions numbered four, five, and six, discussed generations and intergenerational participants. The definition of generation was presented in question four, and sixty-seven percent indicated that they agreed with the definition; twenty percent disagreed with the definition and thirteen percent were neutral. Regarding the ages of an intergenerational congregation, twenty percent of the respondents agreed that all members born in the same year constitute that particular congregation. However, seventy-three percent disagreed that persons born the same year constitute an intergenerational congregation; seven percent indicated they were neutral to statement

five. Eighty-seven percent of the participants agreed that an intergenerational congregation is composed of more than one generation and thirteen percent disagreed with number six. No one indicated neutrality.

The post-test results on those same three questions indicated that sixty percent agreed with the definition of generation, which declined seven percent from sixty-seven percent, and those who disagreed rose twenty percent to forty percent, and no one remained neutral for question four. Question five regarding an intergenerational congregation indicated a decrease of thirteen percent from twenty percent to seven percent of those who agreed, and increased twenty percent in disagreement to ninety-three percent, and those who agree decreased by thirteen percent. The respondents increased their agreement in question six on Intergenerational Congregations from eighty-seven percent to ninety-three percent which is an increase of six percent. Those participants in dissension declined to one percent while those who were neutral increased to six percent.

Numbers seven, eight, and nine sought the respondents' understanding of worship practices and participants. Twenty percent of participants stated that the worship of the church only consisted of song and preaching; eighty percent disagreed. When presented with the practices of some Biblical characters singing and dancing before the Lord as acts of worship, forty-seven percent of the respondents indicated they agreed that those activities were acts of worship. However, thirty-three percent of the participants disagreed and twenty percent indicated they were neutral. The final point on the pre-test was about the composition of an intergenerational worship service; and there was a one hundred percent agreement that there has to more than one generation actively

participating in the service honoring God in order to be considered an intergenerational worship service.

In the post-test, the respondents for question seven were one hundred percent in disagreement that worship is only singing and preaching. Question eight presented some confusion as to how the biblical characters were worshipping God. However, those who agree that the characters were worshipping God rose forty-three percent from thirty-seven percent to eighty percent. Question nine regarding Intergeneration Worship remained the same and produced 100% agreement that in order to have true Intergenerational Worship more than one generation needs to be actively participating in the service. The post-test for these three questions indicated an increase in understanding of the issues.

Question ten served as an evaluation of how many participants increased their knowledge of how to worship and serve God with all the generations in the church. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents indicated they agreed that they gained new information, while thirteen percent disagreed. This presented a positive indication that teaching on various subject matter is needed.

The Bible Study Trilogy was developed to enhance a participant's knowledge and awareness of God's commandments regarding obedience, teaching future generations, and preparing all generations to worship together. The purpose of the first Bible study was to discuss the Christians' obedience to God's commandments of teaching the future generations and how important it is for Christians to obey God's will. Two scriptures were utilized from the Old and New Testaments regarding obedience.

The lesson was divided into three segments and began with seeking a definition from the participants for the word obedience what it means for Christians to obey and

serve God. Three scriptures were studied in order to attempt to comprehend obedience from a biblical standpoint. The second part of the lesson spoke of those who obeyed God's commandments and their rewards and those who disobeyed God and their consequences. The third portion of the lesson gave the participants an opportunity to discuss some Old and New Testament scriptures regarding the importance of obeying God. Each participant provided an example of how they had obeyed God in teaching someone in another generation, especially someone in a younger generation. The lesson was summarized as to how we as Christians have been obedient and disobedient in our actions regarding teaching our younger generation about God. Single participants explained that one could teach a neighbor or their younger relatives.

The second lesson of the Bible Study Series was on teaching the generations and passing the mantle of love and power. Three scriptures from the Old Testament and Psalms framed the lesson reminding them that we are always expected to teach and pass on the mantle of God's wisdom and authority. A discussion ensued as we attempted to bring the scriptures into the twenty-first century. We reviewed the first lesson on obedience and defined teaching. Each participant was given the opportunity to express who they had taught and who had taught them in their Christian walk. The elders and some of the married members expressed teaching their children and grandchildren. Single members expressed teaching younger sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews and neighborhood children.

In the second portion of the lesson there was a discussion of the concepts of generation and intergeneration. An explanation was given about the difference between the two, and again a review of the Lord's commandment about future generations being

taught about God. The final session of the second lesson defined the word mantle, who wore a mantle, and what a mantle represented. The participants discussed mantle wearing Biblical characters, especially Elijah and Elisha. A lively discussion ensued as to the importance of mantles, how we inherit them and how we give them to the next generation. The discussion reminded the elders that they are the ones expected to reach out to the younger generation, and that those who are now the younger generation must reach out to the youngest children who are the future. The participants shared how they sing, dance, lift their hands, clap their hands, and cry out to God with tears of joy falling. We ended by sharing that there is no one way to praise God as long as one is joyful in doing it.

The Bible study's third lesson was on generations worshipping together. After a brief review of the previous two lessons on obedience, teaching the generations, and what a mantle symbolized, a video was shown. The video was entitled, "The Believer's Judgement," from John Bevere's Ministry. The video presented three Christians giving an account of their life on earth. Two felt they had served the Lord because of their occupations; one was an accountant and the other was a pastor. The Lord informed them they had not done what He wanted them to do, therefore souls were lost. The third person was a mother and she told God that she did not have the opportunity to serve Him as she wanted because she was busy raising her four children. God informed her that she had done exactly what he wanted her to do. She had taught her four children about God, and because of the children's lives thousands of souls had been saved. A discussion followed the video as to the Christians' role in sharing God with someone else.

The group discussed what worship is and what it consists of. They further discussed who or what should worship and how one should worship. Each person shared

something about their worship and at the conclusion, the participants realized that they often had much in common in how they worshipped.

The Contextual Associates assisted in conducting the interviews of the members of the congregation who represented various generations and the planning and execution of the Intergenerational Breakfast. In an effort to continue the conversation between the generations of the church, an Intergenerational Breakfast was held. It was noted that conversations developed between the generation after the Prayer/Bible Study Event, and it was decided that it be kept alive.

The Chairpersons of all ministries and the young adults of the church were invited to attend and to explain their ministry giving a brief history and extending an invitation to the young adult to join them. The theme of the breakfast was, "Passing the Mantle." One of the young adults on the Contextual Associate team suggested that the young adults may participate freely if they were asked to participate on the morning of the breakfast. As everyone signed in the young adults were asked to lead the breakfast by reading scripture and doing a welcome.

As the breakfast guests arrived they were accompanied to a selected table to ensure that each table had an intergenerational formation. The three-hour breakfast program began with greetings from one of the Contextual Associates who was a young adult, followed by prayer, scripture, and welcome. The program continued with a "Getting to Know You" activity, in which everyone was given the opportunity to meet and greet everyone else at their table. After the introduction Rev. Sarah Benjamin hosted the ice-breakers which consisted of recognizing Biblical information, then discussing what they sought when they attended church. Participants were also asked what qualities

or characteristics did they feel people needed to enhance the church and which of those qualities or characteristics did they possess. They made suggestions as to what would propel the church further into the twenty-first century. One of the most important suggestions was becoming friendlier with the people with whom you worship. That statement sent silence through the room. Guests pondered the statement and made suggestions for additional opportunities for events that brought the church together to just know each other.

In an article, “Why the Church Needs Intergenerational Friendships,” Joseph Rhea states, “Intergenerational community is part of God’s vision for the church. . . . It’s a beautiful one, and friendship is the key. When individual Christians believe it is worth sacrificing for, our church will begin reflecting that multigenerational beauty.”⁸ The article also describes several things that will bring people together if they make friends across generational lines.

Sharing wisdom is one of the things that is mentioned as a benefit of intergenerational friendship—passing on what has been learned from one generation to another can enhance and empower one’s beliefs. Finding wonder is another benefit of multi-generational friendships, as one generation tells another how they have made it through both the good and bad times of life. Godliness is the most gratifying inheritance of generational friendships according to Rhea; it brings forth the commonality one has with another and the more you have in common with someone the easier it is to love that

⁸ Joseph Rhea, “Why the Church Needs Intergenerational Friendships,” *The Gospel Coalition* (January 8, 2015), accessed February 11, 2017, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-the-church-needs-intergenerational-friendships>.

person.⁹ Our churches need to focus more on the friendships between generations so that we can be the church that Jesus hopes for us to be. It is easier to share with and teach one another when we relate to one another on this personal level.

At the conclusion of the exercise regarding how to move our churches forward, each table reported the names and comments of their table. Every participant indicated that at their table they had more in common than not, regardless of their ages. We continued to have the young adults be active participants as they were asked to bless the food and direct the table to the buffet. A hearty breakfast was served which provided those gathered with another opportunity to chat. The program continued after breakfast with the introduction of the purpose of the occasion. It was my responsibility to speak about the purpose of the breakfast, including a discussion of the meaning of the terms generations, intergeneration, and mantle, as well as pointing out how all the age cohorts in the church could learn to worship more cohesively together. The Old and New Testament passages that undergirded the project were briefly discussed, and “The Shema,” was explained. Time was allowed for a brief discussion.

The next session, entitled “Here We Are! Do You See Me?,” allowed the young people to discuss what they have liked about the church, and what they have not liked, what changes they would like to see and how they would like to be included. Several young adults even expressed a desire to belong to different ministries. Some of the young men made a plea to have programs about how other men made the transition from being young men to being fully adult men. The session was led by one of the young adults from

⁹ Rhea, “Why the Church Needs Intergenerational Friendships.”

among Contextual Associates. No older adult was allowed to speak during this portion of the program.

The chairpersons of the major auxiliaries in the church addressed the participants, giving the history of their ministries and what they do. At the end of their presentations, a welcome was extended to the young adults to visit the ministries of those present in order to decide whether they might want to join. As the program came to an end an open discussion followed with questions and answers. A request was made (by me) for the adults to be more mentoring and encouraging in their relationships with the young adults. All participants were thanked for giving of their time that day. Ending the program, Rev. Ealey also thanked the participants for their honesty, their time, and their participation he stated that it is a need to come together more frequently as a church to express new ideas. Rev. Ealey then gave the benediction.

Communication is an important facet of any congregation that consists of different generations. Age appropriate programs can be held separately, but there should also be events that encourage bonding between the various cohorts. It is necessary to determine an important center from which they can initiate programs.

Prior to and after the Intergenerational Breakfast, several members of the Senior Missionary Society and some of the younger members of the congregation representing five generations were interviewed. They were given an opportunity to discuss what religious and secular music and biblical scriptures carry them over the pot-holes of life.

Six questions were asked of each respondent. The questions were: 1) what hymn or religious song would you share with a younger generation that has helped you survive or has given you hope?; 2) what secular or world song has provided you joy?; 3) what

Biblical scripture have you held onto that has helped you survive?; 4) what inheritance or gift would you give to a younger generation (anyone ten years younger than you) to assist them in serving the Lord? It can be a book, a scripture, song, poem, etc.; 5) state something about your life that has helped you survive spiritually; 6) how would you incorporate a younger generation into a worship service?

At the end of the six question the two anchor scriptures (Deuteronomy 4: 9 and Matthew 28: 19-20) were presented and the respondents were asked to identify what action word both scriptures had in common. They were then asked if they had participated in teaching anyone. The action was identified as teach. We discussed teaching and who could teach.

The respondents of all generations indicated they valued holding onto and trusting God while being kept in God's Light. The Baby Boomers expressed their assurance that they trusted God which they had learned over the years. Members of generation X indicated that they are learning through conversations how to surrender to God. A young adult indicated that listening to the song "Holding to God's Unchanging Hand" helped him to survive. This song had also been important to one of the members of the GI generation in a similar way. It was amazing that despite six decades separating them the two generations see the Lord as holding them.

In question two regarding secular songs, the GI and Silent generations indicated that they like the rock and roll sounds of James Brown and Wilson Pickett. Generation X like the sound of Marvin Gaye's music, while the Millennials chose the inspiration songs of John Legend and One Republic.

When asked about the scriptures that helped them to survive, the five generations all indicated that prayer and three scriptures carried them through the storms of life. The Lord's Prayer was on all the generations' lists. Psalm 103 was emphasized by the World War II and Silent generations. Psalm 23 is held in high esteem by the Baby Boomers and the Millennials. All five generations were asked what they would give to a younger generation. The Bible was the number one gift on the list by the older generations. The two younger generations, X and the Millennials, chose the Daily Word, or just a scripture and seeking advice from trusted elders as their response.

Asked about stating something that had helped them to survive spiritually, all of the generations agreed that reading the Bible and praying helped them in every way. The GI's and Silent generation stated that surrendering to God along with reading the Bible assisted them in holding on during tough times. Generation X and the Millennials stated that wisdom and guidelines from some trusted elders help them to survive. The word of God is powerful in all the generations' lives. Those powerful words should be the connector that binds the generations, but that is not always the way.

Asking about how to incorporate a younger generation into a worship service, all of the generations agreed that one of the ways to incorporate the younger generation into the worship is for a reliable older Christian to model for them and to teach them, but to be open to hear and discuss their suggestions. The GI's, the Silent generation, and the Baby Boomers suggest observing the younger Christians and walking and talking with them so they do not feel like observers. The older Christians should be ready to answer the questions of the younger generations. The Millennials suggested teaching their age group,

sharing some of the stumbling blocks of the older generation and explaining the Christian walk with an open mind and no judgment.

The two scriptures which anchored the project were presented to ascertain if the generations saw the action directive in both. All five generations recognized that teaching was the action verb that every child of God should be practicing; teaching about God's goodness. All five generations indicated that they have taught and are teaching someone, sharing their struggles and happiness in serving God. They indicated that they taught their children, their relatives, and people in their neighborhood, those in church, and in nursing homes. The Baby Boomers indicated that they were always in a teaching mode; teaching their children, the community children, and the church's children.

The planned events had to be adjusted due to the church celebrations in the year 2017. Some of the original plans that included evangelizing had to be deleted; however, one of the chairpersons did mentor a young adult. Some of the planned workshops on generations were incorporated into the Bible studies. Conversations with the pastor about the generations produced an agreement that we would develop a fifth Sunday as Young Adult with a younger minister.

Summary of Learning

The pre-test produced information that was needed to prepare the Bible study lessons. If time had permitted the studies would have been five sessions to allow for more conversation and interaction and build into a workshop. There is a need for a continuation of the generational events that encourage all age cohorts to interact. The project showed how many hands are needed to have successful events. All the planning and execution

need several eyes and hands to bring an event to fruition. Not only are contextual members necessary, but, depending on the event, there is a need for culinary, printing, organizing, and cleanup committees.

At the conclusion of the Bible study trilogy and the luncheon along with the interviews, an increased sense of the awareness of each generation's contributions to the church was noted by listening to remarks made and observing the miniscule changes in the ministries. There were younger Deacons and Trustees added. Some young adults are more visibly involved, and one young woman is working with the Souvenir Journal Chairperson, collecting ads, planning layout and journal preparation for the Pastor's 50th Anniversary. The General Usher Board partnered with the male ushers and the youth ushers and served as an intergenerational board on two Sundays. These have been rewarding events and it is hoped they will continue.

The activities of the Intergenerational Study were successful as well. Participants of all ages were presented with an opportunity to discover another's talents and fits. They were afforded time to converse with each other about personal attributes as well as their contributions to the church. There were relationships built between age cohorts that can be lasting. There was a beginning of inclusion of young adult in the ministries, which is the basic premise of the study's hypothesis. The hypothesis stated, "If the church embraces generational inclusion in prayer, worship, Bible study, education, and ministry programs, it will emerge as a vital and sustainable intergenerational congregation." The congregation was embracing of all ages at the Bible studies and at the Intergeneration Breakfast. The church has moved toward inclusion, but the process is slow, but positive. However, the rules of the church do not permit persons who do not own a home to serve

on the Trustee Board, no matter how talented they are or whether or not they possess a degree in Finance; they are not allowed to serve. Future work is needed in this area. The hypothesis is a work in progress, but it has proven to be a positive force in the church. When churches are inclusive of all generations working in every aspect of the ministry from Christian Education to Administration, then they can truly be an intergenerational congregation that worships and serves God together.

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